

SAUDI ARABIA: A LONG AWAITED STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY & INDEPENDENCE



Page 2

On July 10th, thousands of mourners filled the streets of Qatif in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province for the funeral of Muhammed el-Filfil, one of the latest victims of the Saudi regime's recent crackdown on that country's citizens. The funeral march was as much a protest of the kingdom's repressive policies as it was a ceremony for the...



Photo: Janine Solanki

Lift the U.S. Blockade Against Cuba!

Pages 7 - 12

FIRE THIS TIME

We are realists... We dream the impossible - che



FIDEL REFLECTIONS



Page 23

The filmed scenes of the massacre in Libya, starting to be seen, offend for their total absence of humanism and the crass lies that served as an excuse for invading and taking over the natural resources of that country. With more than 25,000 combat missions, NATO air forces backed...

Four Years After Stephen Harper's Hollow Apology: Deception Then, Deception Now

Page 13



Page 15

TEL AVIV STOCK EXCHANGE PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS, TWO FRONTS BURNING THE ZIONIST STATE

Page 19



The news spread faster than the flames which had engulfed the body of the 57 year old Israeli man who lit himself on fire at a rally marking the one year anniversary of the "Social Justice" protest movement which...

The Cuban Revolution meant not only the achievement of the long-awaited national sovereignty, but also a complex process of creating and implementing the project of justice, social equity and solidarity that has been built and defended during these 53 years.

This scenario led to the confrontation and dialogue between generations, cultural patterns, classes and social strata. Old paradigms of power based on domination...

SAUDI ARABIA: A LONG AWAITED STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY AND INDEPENDENCE

By Nita Palmer

Saudi Arabia's Mass Movement: a Long-Awaited Struggle for Democracy and Independence

On July 10th, thousands of mourners filled the streets of Qatif in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province for the funeral of Muhammad el-Filfil, one of the latest victims of the Saudi regime's recent crackdown on that country's citizens. The funeral march was as much a protest of the kingdom's repressive policies as it was a ceremony for the young man. El-Filfil was one of two men killed on July 8th in a protest against the recent shooting and arrest of Sheik Nimr al-Nimr, a well-known Shiite cleric. The incident was only the latest in a wave of protests against the kingdom's declining standard of living, muzzling of protesters and anti-Shia discrimination that has surged since the beginning of the "Arab Spring" mass movements began in December 2010.

The wave of protests in Saudi Arabia was sparked in January 2011 when a 65-year-old man set himself on fire in Samitah. The demonstrations quickly spread to the country's Eastern Province, home to a large portion of the kingdom's Shi'a minority. A handful of labour rights rallies sprang up around the country as well, along with women's suffrage protests.

Protests continued throughout 2011, despite harsh government crackdowns. A number of protesters were killed by Saudi security forces, while many others were arbitrarily arrested and jailed.

The protests have showed no signs of slowing in 2012, although those who make

their voices heard face increasing danger. In January and February, four protesters were killed when security forces opened fire on demonstrations. The Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in the Arabian Peninsula also reported that Saudi security forces arrested medical personnel for treating injured protesters. However, the repression has only



Anti regime protesters in Qatif- July 8, 2012



Barack Obama and King Abdullah - June 28, 2010



Anti-riot police and anti regime protesters clash in Qatif- March 11, 2011

been met with more protests. On January 16, 70,000 people attended funeral for Issam Mo-hamed Abu Abdallah, who was killed by security forces in al-Awamiyah on January 12th.

12th.

Shi'a Denied Human and Democratic Rights

Although it is only recently that these protests have reached the boiling point, the resentment of many of the kingdom's policies have been simmering for a long time. The hub of the protests is in the

Eastern Province, where the central issue is discrimination against Saudi Arabia's Shi'a minority. Shiites make up about 15% of the country's 28 million people, but they have faced official and institutionalized discrimination since the area of the Eastern Province was taken over by the al-Saud family in 1913. The Saudi regime enforces an ultra-conservative type of Sunni Islam

known as Wahhabism, which views Shiites as heretics and treats them as second-class citizens.

Religious rights of the Shi'a are extremely restricted. Shi'a Islam is prohibited in schools, where children are often told they are heretics. Public demonstrations of faith are prohibited. In a 2009 report titled "Denied Dignity: Systematic Discrimination and Hostility toward Saudi Shi'a Citizens", Human Rights Watch reported that, "since 2001

the authorities in Ahsa' have imposed extrajudicial prison sentences on leaders of communal prayers and on persons selling articles used in Shia religious ceremonies such as 'Ashura' and Qarqi'un, which remain prohibited in many Saudi Shia communities."

Shi'a religious texts are also banned, and must be smuggled into the country. Their mosques are all but prohibited as well. In a 2005 article in the Washington Post, Scott Wilson writes, "the twin minarets of an enormous Sunni mosque loom over the old center of [Qatif], a government gift that dwarfs the crumbling mud fortress and concrete homes around it. But only a few of the faithful walk through the mosque's arched doors for evening prayer.

In its shadow is the Shiite mosque, a shop-size jumble of tin, wood planks

and masonry capped by a tiny minaret. Shiites worship inside its moldering brick walls and in the dozens of other antique mosques across this city, landmarks to discrimination.

Shiite leaders say the local government, filled out by Sunnis from outside the region at its upper ranks, had banned the construction of Shiite mosques for 30 years and now normally limits their size."

Discrimination against the Shi'a extends not only to religious life, but to public life, political life and work as well. It is almost unheard of for a Shiite to hold public office, become an officer in the military, or advance beyond low-level positions in any company. This massive inequality in all areas of life has resulted in fertile conditions for today's reawakening of the Shi'a protest movement.

Beneath the Glitter of Black Gold

When asked to imagine Saudi Arabia, most people would conjure up a vision of a desert oasis filled with the by-products of oil wealth:

sparkling skyscrapers, posh Western-only compounds and expensive shopping malls. But underneath the glitz and glamour is a much uglier reality: millions living unemployed and in poverty, a rapidly decreasing standard of living and a brutally repressive state which silences all voices of dissent.

Although the official unemployment rate in Saudi Arabia is 10%, many independent sources put it at closer to 25%. More than three quarters of Saudis work

in government institutions, while eighty percent of the labour force working the private sector are foreigners. According to Foreign Policy magazine, "Foreign workers in Saudi Arabia on average receive wages that are 3.6 times less than what Saudi workers receive, and have a reputation for accepting long hours and poor conditions."

There are dozens of reports of women who come to the kingdom to work as maids, only to find themselves working as little more than slaves. They are

only affected foreign workers, however. The massive importation of non-nationals who will work for nearly nothing has driven down the standards of working and living conditions for everyone in the country. This has resulted in high levels of unemployment, especially among Saudi youth. Estimates put youth unemployment levels at around 40% and rising. Many are left staring at a bleak future in which they will never be able to afford to buy a house or start a family. This frustrated generation is becoming increasingly vocal in calls for

change as they watch youth in other countries such as Egypt and Tunisia who have led the charge for human and democratic rights in their countries.

A Call for Democracy and Human Rights

Protests in the Eastern Province have centered around demands for an

end to anti-Shi'a discrimination and a release of all prisoners held without charge. Activists have also been demanding a withdrawal of Saudi troops from neighbouring Bahrain, where the government has sent security forces in an attempt to crush the mass movement there. However, demands have begun to go beyond a call for rights within the current system; many, including recently arrested cleric Nimr al-Nimr, have been calling for independence of the Eastern Province. Others have called for an overthrow of the al-Saud regime.

Although these protests have been centered in the Eastern Province, it is not only the Shi'a who are demanding their rights. Protests for labour rights, women's rights and for the release of political prisoners have been on the rise in other parts of the country as well. Numerous online voices against the government have sprung up, through blogs, Facebook pages and Twitter accounts on which people across the country have stated their opposition to the government's repressive policies. Because Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy, citizens have no right to form political parties or even vote for their representatives. All laws are drafted by an appointed shura



Saudi Shia Cleric - Sheikh Nemer al Nemer - jailed for his criticisms of the current government - July 22, 2012



Saudi prisoner - Al-ghamdi died due to torture - May 31, 2012



not allowed to leave the country without permission of their employer, and have no recourse in the frequent event that they have not been paid for months or years. A 2011 article in *The Guardian* reported that "[An] Indonesian maid... faces execution for killing her boss whom she alleges tried to rape her. Other recent incidents include a Sri Lankan maid who

had nails driven into her legs and arms by her employers, and another who was scalded with a hot iron."

Men who come to the country to earn a living often work 16 or 20 hour days non-stop for little pay. They also face a complete lack of rights in the legal system, with many being tortured into forced confessions and then executed without any due process, even as it exists under Saudi law.

These horrific working conditions have not

Government Responds with Further Repression

On the other hand, they responded to protests with an attempt to muzzle anyone who spoke out against the government. Protests, even peaceful ones, have long been banned in practice in the kingdom, although they have not been prohibited by law. However, an anti-terrorism law drafted in 2011 would change this. The proposed Penal Law for Terrorism Crimes and Financing of Terrorism would prosecute peaceful dissent and carries harsh penalties for anyone convicted of “questioning the integrity of the King”, “harming the reputation of the state”, or “endangering national unity”, according to Amnesty International. It also allows for arbitrary detention. The law states that “a minimum of 3 years of imprisonment should be imposed on anybody who organizes a protest, participates in organizing it, aids in its preparation, incites or invites others to participate.”

The question of women's rights has also come to the forefront with the tide of the mass movement. Since the foundation of the kingdom, Saudi women have had virtually no rights in their own country. Women are considered dependants of men

Under the strict rule of the Wahabbi clerics, women are not allowed to drive, show their faces in public, or associate with men to whom they are not related. These and other rules are strictly enforced by the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue

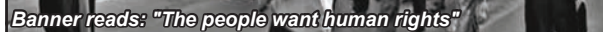
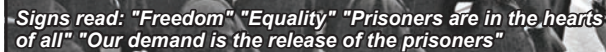
However, women have been increasingly challenging these

In March, 1000 women protested at King Khaled University in Abha against corruption in the country and the university administration allowing the campus to fall into disrepair. Fifty women were injured and one killed by security forces. Protests followed by women at Taibah and Tabuk Universities. On July 15th, ten women were arrested in Buraydah at a protest demanding the release of all political prisoners in the country.

A Colonial Creation

It is important to understand that the Saudi state as it is today would not have come into existence without the direct support of the British Empire. The al-Saud dynasty in the Arabian Peninsula first began in 1744. What

Arab revolt against the Ottoman empire began, supported by Britain. After the Ottoman empire was defeated in World War II, however, Britain reneged on promises to help form a pan-Arab state, instead lending their support to the al-Saud family. This allowed the Saudi dynasty to be consolidated in the Arabian Peninsula and has led to years of their autocratic



rules. In April 2011, many women tried to register as electors for the municipal elections, despite the government declaring that they would not be allowed to do so. In June of that year, 100 women organized a “right to drive” campaign, in which dozens of women defied the ban on their driving a vehicle. Many were arrested and jailed. Earlier in the year, Manal al-Sharif, one of the campaign organizers, was arrested for driving. According to the *New York Times*, al-Sharif was detained for five days and charged

and repressive rule.

US Puppet in the Persian Gulf

Today, the Saudi monarchy is a critical US ally in the Persian Gulf. With the world's largest petroleum reserves and a strategic position in the Middle East, the US administration is very concerned indeed that Saudi Arabia remain under the control of their ally. Although they cry over "human rights violations" and have given support to anti-government forces in Syria and Libya, they remain silent on the Saudi regime's brutal violations of human rights.

In fact, the US ruling class is very concerned with the idea of an anti-government uprising in Saudi Arabia. Major US think-tank the Heritage Foundation released a report in April titled "Thinking the Unthinkable:

Modelling a Collapse of Saudi Oil Production". The introduction to the report states, "if an 'Arab Spring' uprising completely disrupted Saudi oil production, the U.S. and the global economy would face a massive economic and strategic crisis. Russia and Iran as oil-producing states would likely exploit the crisis to increase their power around the world while undermining U.S. influence, especially in the Middle East." The report goes on to paint a picture of what could happen if a mass movement indeed succeeded in overthrowing the government. In its conclusion and recommendations to the US government, the report states that "the U.S. will likely need to selectively use force to ensure the continued flow of oil from the region, as it did in Operation Desert Storm. Securing the oil fields and supporting allies, especially GCC members and pro-American elements in Saudi Arabia, may be imperative." It goes on to list all military forces available to the US in the region, as well as discussing the need for more ballistic missile defenses to be added to the region.

It certainly seems that the US administration is prepared to act should such an

event happen. The Saudi Press Agency reported that on July 9, CIA Director David Petraeus met with King Abdullah in Jeddah about "matters of common concern". Although no details from this meeting were released, it seems highly likely that some of these "matters of common concern" included the need to ensure that no such uprising succeeds.

The Importance of the Struggle for Justice in Saudi Arabia

For decades the people of Saudi Arabia,

even more so.

Also, the significance of the heart of the protests being in the Eastern Province cannot be underestimated. The Eastern Province holds nearly all of the Saudi oil reserves, and therefore a large portion of the US' oil supply. Therefore, the United States and the al-Saud family are quaking in their boots at the idea of a widespread protest movement and talks of Eastern Province independence. A mass movement in Saudi Arabia which succeeded

in overthrowing the monarchy or even achieving independence for the Eastern Province could fundamentally change the balance of power in the Middle East. It would not only mean that one of the world's most important resources would no longer be in the hands of the US, but would also mean that a powerful regime which the US has used to maintain its stranglehold on the resources and trade markets of the Middle East would be defeated. In short, the mass movement in Saudi Arabia, along with the mass movements across the Middle East,

could usher in a new era of democracy and independence that would not be aligned with US interests. This is what the United States is truly afraid of.

We people in Canada and throughout the world must support the people of Saudi Arabia in their struggle for democracy, independence and human rights, both for their own sake and for the sake of people fighting for justice, equality and independence throughout the world.



Protesters hold banner demanding the release of political prisoners - Awamiyah - August 18, 2011



Anti-regime protesters rally in support of jailed Shia cleric Sheikh Nemer al Nemer - July 19, 2012



especially the Shi'a population, have suffered under iron fist of the al-Saud regime and their puppet-masters, the United States. With the inspiration of other mass movements in the Arab world, they have stood up to demand their rights even in the face of severe repression. The mainstream media has virtually ignored the protest movement in Saudi Arabia, and when it is written about it is often with the criticism that it is only a small movement that is not capable of bringing change. Although the movement is not yet as large as it has been in some other Arab countries, it is no less significant. In a country where all political organization is banned outright, the organization of any protests at all is that much more significant. The ongoing protests of tens of thousands of people,

BAHRAIN: THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

By Azza Rojbi

Protesters in Bahrain have been holding peaceful demonstrations across the country since mid-February 2011, calling for an end to the Al Khalifa dynasty's over-40-year rule. As their struggle for human rights and democracy continues, the government has escalated its brutal repression.

According to the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, at least 79 people have been killed since the protests began. Thousands more have been detained, including Ali Hasan, an 11-year-old Bahraini boy accused of taking part in anti-government protests. Hasan had spent a month behind bars before being released on June 11 under the condition that he must be monitored by a social worker for a year.

Despite the government's attempts to crush the protest movement, the brave Bahraini people continue protesting daily in the streets.

On July 20, thousands took to the street in several cities across the country, calling on the government to release all political prisoners and denouncing the government's plans to limit oppositional marches. Immediately, government forces responded brutally with riot police firing massive amounts of tear gas at the peaceful protesters. Following the government crackdown, clashes and street battles erupted across the small Gulf Kingdom.

Meanwhile the Bahraini Interior Minister Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa held a series of meetings with United States top officials and members of the Senate, as well as congressmen, during an official two-day visit to the US. He also met with CIA director-general David Petraeus and FBI director Robert Mueller.

During the meetings, Shaikh Rashid expressed Bahrain's eagerness in reinforcing security, co-operation, and expertise exchange, with the US.

According to Bahrain News Agency, the US officials praised the King's reforms project and highlighted the importance of Bahrain as a strong ally and friend of the US, expressing sincere appreciation to the Kingdom for hosting the US Fifth Fleet.

The United States is not just turning a blind eye to the repressive practices of the Bahraini government but also providing the Al Khalifa regime with full political support and military expertise. In fact the US is working in complete complicity with the Bahraini regime in its crackdown on its people, while at the same time preaching to the Syrian government on human rights.

It becomes clear that the United States and its allies like Saudi Arabia, which on March 14, 2011 sent 1,200 troops to assist the Bahraini government in suppressing the protests, have no real interest in promoting democracy or human rights in

North Africa or the Middle East. The hypocritical position of these regimes is only driven by the economic and strategic interest of their imperialist masters.

As peace loving people around the world we must agree that the United States and other imperialist countries have no right in imposing their will on weaker and poor nations, and we must demand the right of all oppressed nations to self-determination. Liberation from the yoke of colonial powers is the true step for independence and dignity for all oppressed nations. We must demand US out of the Middle East and North Africa!

For further reading please refer to "Bahrain: Exposing US Hypocrisy in the Middle East" By Nita Palmer in Fire This Time Volume 7 Issue 3, online at <http://www.firethistime.net/articles/Volume7/V7N3/FTTV7N3-bahrain.html>

Scan QR code to read the article



The Newspaper Of

**FIRE THIS TIME
MOVEMENT FOR
SOCIAL JUSTICE**

www.firethistime.net

Volume 7 Issue 5 July 20, 2012

Published every 3 weeks

Political Editor:

Ali Yerevani
editorftt@mail.net

Editorial Board:

Tamara Hansen, Aaron Mercredi, Alison Bodine, Nita Palmer, Janine Solanki, Thomas Davies, Ali Yerevani
editorialboardftt@mail.net

Layout & Design:

Janine Solanki, Thomas Davies, Shakeel Lochan, Sarah Alwell, Azza Rojbi, Max Tennent, Julia Frohn-Nielsen & Ali Yerevani

Copy Editors:

Nita Palmer, Tamara Hansen, Julia Frohn-Nielsen (assistant copy editor)

Publicity & Distribution Coordinator:

Thomas Davies

Production Managers:

Janine Solanki, Thomas Davies

Contributors to this Issue:

Manuel Yepe, Azza Rojbi, Sanam Soltanzadeh

Contact

Phone - (604) 322-1764

Fax - (604) 322-1763

Email - infoftt@mail.net

Mail - PO Box 21607 Vancouver BC, V5L 5G3

Subscriptions

For a one year subscription outside the lower mainland, make cheques payable to "Nita Palmer" (Canada \$15, USA \$20, International \$30) Send to: PO Box 21607 Vancouver BC, V5L 5G3

Distribution

For Fire This Time in your area across BC, Canada, and Internationally contact Publicity and Distribution Coordinator *Thomas Davies*
Phone : (778) 889-7664
Email : distroftt@mail.net

Submissions & Suggestions

We welcome articles, letters, unsolicited submissions, and suggestions. However, we cannot promise publication. Submissions and suggestions can be made by email by contacting submissions@firethistime.net, fax, or regular mail. Submissions will not be returned.

The opinions expressed in the newspaper are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent those of Fire This Time.

Donations

If you find Fire This Time to be an effective tool in the struggle of oppressed people for justice, more than ever, we need your support. On top of our regular costs of production, we regularly send members of our editorial board on assignment throughout North America, the Caribbean and beyond in order to make Fire This Time a better resource. These efforts have strained our finances.

If you would like to help with a donation, please make cheques payable to "Nita Palmer".

This Newspaper could not have been possible without the generous contributions from our supporters.

Reprint Policy

Reprinting of articles from Fire This Time by progressive media is welcomed, with source credit to the author and Fire This Time Newspaper. All other media or institutions must request permission

-ISSN-1712-1817-

Next Prints:

Volume 7 Issue 6, August 10, 2012

Volume 7 Issue 7, September 7, 2012

PASTORS FOR PEACE CARAVAN TO CUBA TOUR IN BC A HUGE SUCCESS!

Every summer since 1992, the Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba, a Cuba solidarity project organized by the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) in the United States, breaks the U.S. blockade and travel ban against Cuba. The blockade is broken when humanitarian aid collected in communities all across Canada and the U.S. is openly taken through the U.S./Mexico border and then delivered to Cuba. The law that prevents people in the U.S. from travelling to Cuba is broken when Caravanistas participate in a educational and cultural program in Cuba and then return to the U.S. declaring that they have been to the island nation.

This year marked the 20th Anniversary Caravan to Cuba. Brightly painted school buses, box trucks and other vehicles once again took to the highway with their message to lift the U.S. blockade against Cuba, return Guantanamo Bay to Cuba and free the Cuban 5 political prisoners held in the U.S. From June 24th through July 15th events were held in 80 cities all over the U.S. and Canada, from Ottawa to Atlanta and Vancouver to El Paso, which educated people about the U.S. blockade against Cuba, the Cuban 5 and the gains made by the people of Cuba since the 1959 Cuban Revolution.

Part 1: Pastors for Peace Speaker Bill Hackwell Tours Across BC

The Pastors for Peace Caravan began with a tour through British Columbia organized by the British Columbia Aid Network for Cuba (BCANC)

in coordination with groups and individuals in cities across BC. Each event to "send-off" the Caravan on it's way to Cuba featured route speaker Bill Hackwell, a known social documentary photographer and an organizer

with the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five. Bill shared his knowledge and experience about Cuba and the Cuban 5, bringing with him a message of the necessity solidarity across borders in the struggle to end the U.S. blockade against Cuba, a policy which not only prevents trade between the U.S. and Cuba, but also effects the ability of Cuba to trade internationally for everything from steel and medicine to paper and food products.

During the one week of the whirlwind tour, Bill spoke in four cities across BC; Victoria, Nanaimo, Kamloops and Vancouver. The kick off for the tour was on Sunday

brought together people from the Nanaimo solidarity community as well as students and faculty from the University.



Vancouver Send Off, June 30, 2012



Victoria event, June 24, 2012



Caravan speaker Bill Hackwell interviewed by Aaron Mercredi on Coop Radio



Kamloops event, June 29, 2012

food, musical performances and a lively discussion about Cuba and the Caravan.

Then on Wednesday, June 26th Cuba solidarity activists in Nanaimo screened the film "Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up?" by world-renowned director Saul Landau at Vancouver Island

University. The event was sponsored by the Vancouver Island University Faculty Association's Human Rights and International Solidarity Committee, and

June 24th when Latin America solidarity activists in Victoria came together for delicious

first time that Kamloops has hosted the Pastors for Peace Caravan and many people participating in the event were new to Cuba and excited to learn more, get involved in solidarity and wanted to "hop on the bus" and go on the Caravan next summer!

On Saturday June 30th the tour to end the U.S. blockade against Cuba arrived in Vancouver. Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) organized a BBQ and cultural evening at Trout Lake Park. Cuba solidarity and social justice activists were not deterred by the typical Vancouver summertime rain, and came together underneath the gazebo decorated with Cuban flags and brightly coloured banners. The cultural program included local Mexican singer and guitar player Yahara Muñoz; Thomas P. Radcliffe, a folksinger and songwriter from New Mexico; and Eliza Gardner, singer/songwriter from Nanaimo.

Part 2: Gathering for the Peace Arch Border Crossing

Events from the BC-wide tour culminated

in a cross-border solidarity gathering held at Peace Arch Park, at the BC/Washington border, on Sunday July 1st. The BC Aid Network for Cuba as well as other Cuba solidarity organizations and individuals from Vancouver, the Lower Mainland, Victoria, Nanaimo, Courtenay/Comox, Kamloops, Bellingham, Tacoma, Seattle and Olympia came together for an afternoon of food, music and friendship, as well as protest action.

Before picking up Cuban flags and banners demanding “End the Blockade Against Cuba!” and marching together to



Vancouver event - raffle winner! June 30, 2012

the border to ensure the passage of humanitarian aid from BC into the U.S., people enjoyed a dynamic program of speakers and musicians. This featured a rallying presentation from Caravan route speaker Bill Hackwell, as well as greetings from each of the Caravanistas who would be getting on the bus that day, including 5 Cuba solidarity organizers from Vancouver and two young activists from Denmark who had travelled to Vancouver to begin their journey and musical performances by Thomas P. Radcliffe, folksinger and songwriter and socially conscious hip-hop artist Joose Justis. This year also included a special dedication to Tom Warner a long-time Cuba solidarity

activist and social justice fighter from Seattle, who passed away in 2011. As well, special recognition was given to the founder of IFCO/Pastors for Peace, Rev. Lucius Walker, Jr. Who passed away in September of 2010. Although Tom and Lucius were not at the border this year, their presence and fighting spirits were with everyone as we headed to the border.

Every year the BC/Washington border crossing is an important test for the U.S. government and the blockade against Cuba. As aid enters the U.S. from Canada, activists declare that the final destination of the aid is Cuba, directly challenging the U.S. border officials to respond. Last year, Caravanistas were told repeatedly by U.S. border officials they would not allow the aid to cross without the payment of an outrageous bond until an emergency media campaign,

legal challenge and extended demonstration on both sides of the border forced them to allow the aid through.

As Caravan supporters and activists marched, alongside the truck load of humanitarian aid including medical and education supplies and sports equipment collected all over BC, toward the border, they were sure that with determination and unity this year would also end in victory. 24 hours later that victory had been assured. After continuous protest on both sides of the U.S./Canada border and at two



Peace Arch Border Crossing, July 1, 2012

border crossings, a great victory against the U.S. blockade against Cuba was won and the truck full of humanitarian aid that was initially denied entry into the U.S. was let through. [For more information about the struggle and victory at the border please see page 9.]

The victory at the border was a strong ending to a successful week of events and actions in solidarity with Cuba in BC. Through the 23rd Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba, hundreds of people were able to learn more



Bill Hackwell speaks at Vancouver event, June 30, 2012

about Cuba, the Cuban 5 and join in a cross-border solidarity project through attending and organizing events and collecting humanitarian aid, not to mention the tens of thousands of people who listened to the radio interviews with Bill Hackwell, or watched the news coverage on every major television station in BC, including the National television network, the CBC, of the victorious struggle at the border.

From such a powerful beginning the 23rd Pastors for Peace Caravan crossed the border into Mexico on July 19th. Now it is our responsibility here to continue to support the Caravan, not only as they return to the U.S. proudly declaring that they have been in Cuba on July 31st, but also throughout this year, and every year until the U.S. blockade against Cuba is lifted.

For more information please visit:

The BC Aid Network for Cuba:
www.bcanc.org

**End the U.S. Blockade Against Cuba!
Cuba Si! Bloqueo No!
Free the Cuban 5 Now!**



Peace Arch Border Crossing, July 1, 2012

CUBA SOLIDAIRTY ACTIVISTS RESPOND TO U.S. CUSTOMS ATTACK: Press Release Calls for Resistance and Fightback!

BC Aid Network to Cuba
<http://www.bcanc.org>

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC)
<http://www.vancubasolidarity.com>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 2nd 2012

Humanitarian aid for Cuba denied entry into the US! Protesters occupy lot directly in front of U.S. border, vowing not to leave until aid let through!

Press conference:
Monday, July 2nd
12 noon

Pacific Highway #15 truck border crossing
In the lot in front of the US customs office
Surrey, BC, Canada

** Following the press conference Caravanistas will attempt to cross the border with the humanitarian aid

Press contacts:
Janine Solanki - Contact on Canada side-
Tamara Hansen - Contact on U.S. side Bill Hackwell - Caravan route speaker from

Oakland, U.S. On Canada side

On Sunday July 1st, U.S. customs stopped a truck full of humanitarian aid destined for Cuba. This shipment of aid is part of the 23rd Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba, and includes items such as medical supplies like wheelchairs, educational supplies and sports equipment which were collected from various cities and communities throughout British Columbia, Canada.

The truck of aid was stopped at the West Coast Peace Arch Border Crossing and diverted to the commercial Pacific Truck Border Crossing with the excuse that the Caravanistas were transporting commercial goods and needed to purchase a bond to enter the US. This same scenario played out at last year's border crossing, which ended in victory for the caravan as humanitarian aid is exempt from having to purchase a bond.

At the commercial crossing, supporters set up protests on both the U.S. and Canadian sides of the border with Cuban flags, banners and spirited chants of "Lift the blockade on Cuba Now!" and "Let the Aid Through!" The truck of aid was immediately pulled aside for secondary questioning

and inspection. After over four hours of protest during the inspection, they declared that no aid would cross without a bond, and under no circumstances would sporting goods be allowed entry. "Is the U.S. really threatened by soccer balls and used baseball gloves going to Cuba via the U.S.?" asked Tamara Hansen, coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba and Caravanista, from the U.S. side of the protest.

The truck was escorted back to the Canada side of the border. It is now parked directly in front of the U.S. border, along with an encampment of activists, caravanistas and supporters. They have vowed to occupy this space, 24 hours a day, until the aid is let through without any condition.

"This is yet another blatant example of how the Obama administration continues to tighten the over 50 year old criminal blockade instead of seeking to normalize relations with Cuba." said Bill Hackwell, caravan route speaker and organizer with the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5.

We encourage media to join the press conference and to reflect this pressing issue.

We demand:
Let the aid through!
Lift the blockade on Cuba!
Occupy the border!

WE FOUGHT BACK AND WON! HOW CUBAN SOLIDARITY ACTIVISTS IN BC, FORCED U.S. CUSTOMS TO BACK OFF! A VICTORY FOR CUBAN PEOPLE, A VICTORY FOR HUMANITY!

In the era that we live in, characterized by increasing attacks against poor and working people both at home and abroad by colonial powers like the U.S., European Union and Canada, it is important to recognize the opportunity for fightback and victory against these attacks. From July 1st to July 2nd, 2012 people in Vancouver, Canada had such an opportunity and won a important victory, not only against the cruel and inhumane U.S. blockade against Cuba, but also in defense of the democratic rights of people in Canada and the U.S. to organize and protest against U.S.-led policies creating devastation all over the world.

The victory of Occupy Border outlined below shows to everyone fighting for a better world that victory for oppressed people is possible. When the U.S. government and border officials decided to enforce the U.S. blockade, stopping a truck of humanitarian aid destined for Cuba from entering the U.S., they did not know that Cuba solidarity activists on both sides of the U.S./Canada border would fight back. They did not expect that for 24hrs people of all ages and backgrounds would unite in protest and occupy the border. When at 2pm on July 1st,

the humanitarian aid crossed the border into the U.S. and began it's journey to Cuba on the 23rd Pastors for Peace Caravan it was clear that the U.S. government had not planned to be defeated, but they were.

Printed below are the documents of this victory. The first piece is the press release sent by the BC Aid Network for Cuba (BCANC) and Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC), the groups of Occupy Border, sent the morning of July 2nd, the second day of protest. This press release, was an important component of the victory, which elevated public awareness of the struggle at the border in BC, Canada and around the world as it was propagated through blogs, websites and e-mail lists in the U.S., Canada, Latin America and world-wide. The following piece is the statement released by BCANC and VCSC on June 6th that presents the time-line of the victory and an analysis of it's development. This statement was sent to social justice and Cuba solidarity activists all over the world, and it is an important document to read to understand the important components and lessons of this victory as we prepare for more fightback.

The victory of Occupy Border set a precedent for the entire Caravan, fueled by the excitement and determination generated at the BC/Washington border as it travelled to over 80 cities in the United States and Canada. On July 19th, over 100 tons of humanitarian aid, including the aid collected in British Columbia, along with Caravanistas, successfully crossed the U.S. border into Mexico and broke the U.S. blockade against Cuba.

We encourage all people interested in building a better world to learn from this victory and join with us in organizing against the criminal U.S. blockade against Cuba. It is only with fightback that we will win!

For more info and to get involved-

British Columbia Aid Network for Cuba (BCANC):
www.bcanc.org

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC):
www.vancubasolidarity.com

Pastors for Peace and the Caravan to Cuba: www.pastorsforpeace.org

JOINT STATEMENT AND REPORT BY OCCUPY BORDER GROUPS: Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) & the BC Aid Network for Cuba (BCANC) www.vancubasolidarity.com | www.bcanc.org July 6, 2012



In memory of a true fighter for peace and social justice causes Rev. Lucius Walker, the founder of IFCO/Pastors for Peace and the inspirer and founder of the Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba

Victory for the Caravan to Cuba! Victory for the Cuban People! Victory for Humanity!

U.S. and Canadian activists with the Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba, organized by IFCO/Pastors for Peace and local groups and individuals, joined together to break the U.S. blockade against Cuba – a truck of humanitarian aid previously denied and rejected by U.S. customs officials is now on its way to Cuba!

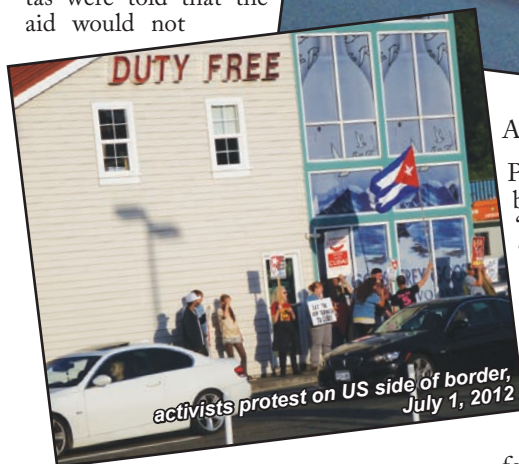
U.S. Government Challenges the Caravan to Cuba

This year's 20th Anniversary Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba has begun and is riding on the victory of a successful struggle against the U.S. government at the West Coast's Canada/US border crossing. After over 24 hours of continuous protest and resistance by Caravanistas and their supporters, without the imposed payment of a bond for any part of the humanitarian aid, the previously denied truck full of medical and sports equipment destined for Cuba crossed successfully into the U.S. in the afternoon of Monday July 2nd. This truck is part of the 23rd Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba, which openly challenges the U.S. trade and travel blockade that has been imposed on Cuba for over 50 years.

This important victory for the Caravan was short but intense, the culmination of events beginning with the unsuccessful attempt

to send the humanitarian aid into the U.S. on Sunday July 1st at the Peace Arch Border Crossing, the border of Vancouver and Washington State. Diverted from this first attempt, protesters followed the truck over to the commercial Pacific Highway Truck Crossing, just a few miles away, where the second unsuccessful attempt to cross was made later in the evening. At this time, Caravanistas were told that the aid would not

fence and surroundings with Cuban flags, Free the Cuban 5 Heroes picket signs and banners demanding "Lift the Blockade!" and "U.S. Hands Off Cuba!" They also put out a big sandwich board saying "Honk for Cuba, Let the



Aid Through!"

Protesters continued from both sides of the border chanting "Let the aid through!", "Lift the blockade on Cuba now!", and "U.S. Hands Off Cuba!" In order to make sure that U.S. border authorities understood that Caravanistas were serious about their demands and this would be a long battle, a second tent, tables, chairs, sleeping bags, food and a space for the outreach and media teams was set up. A generator was started to provide power for the various teams of Occupy Border. Next, the line of communication with the Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba in New York was established and the next line of actions and legal work planned. Continuing into the night and onto the next day activists maintained the protest site directly in front of the U.S. border with one clear message - we won't go until our demands are met! From just about 1 AM Monday July 2nd until dawn, occupiers wrote a press release and statements and called for a press conference for the same day to be held directly in front of the border crossing, the spot called Occupy Border.

Caravanistas and their supporters were left with no choice by U.S. border authorities but to resist and challenge this exclusion to whatever stage necessary to fight back. It was clear to everyone in Occupy Border that blocking the humanitarian aid is, in nature, an act of punishing Cuba and the Pastors for Peace Caravan to Cuba. It is also true that holding up the Caravan at the border is part of the political, economical

be let through without a bond and that negotiations were closed for the night. Caravanistas and Cuba solidarity activists immediately decided to occupy the border until their demands for the release of the humanitarian aid into the United States were met.

Resist, Organize, Fightback

About 40 protesters on both sides of the crossing, who originally came earlier to the Peace Arch border crossing, started chanting and waving Cuban flags. In the meantime, Vancouver activists set up their first tent and covered the



and financial blockade that the U.S. government has been waging and imposing on Cuba for more than 50 years. However, the atmosphere of Occupy Border was nothing but to resist injustice. The spirit of struggle was high and unbreakable and we declared very clearly - we will fight until we win!

The Battle of Public Opinion and Media

On Monday at 12 noon all major media in Canada attended our press conference. About 14 radio, TV and newspapers covered all we wanted the people of the world to hear - lift the blockade of Cuba, let the aid pass through! The presence of full scale media was impressive. It was obvious to U.S. border authorities that the case was not local anymore and that the pressure would mount more and more every hour on an international level. Indeed, in the next 24 hours thousands of pieces of news coverage came through mainstream media, the internet and social media activists. The world, from Canada to Mexico and Ecuador, to Australia and China and Pakistan, and from Iran and Palestine to Turkey and Germany and Spain and Tunisia and Britain, saw how the U.S. government was so desperately blocking baseball hats and soccer balls to protect 50 years of the inhuman and criminal blockade of Cuba. We defeated the U.S. government and its blockade in world public opinion even before humanitarian aid from the province of British Columbia in Canada passed through the border. While organizers and activists were trying to expand outreach to the world, the e-mails, calls and text messages became an ongoing stream into our phones, computers and tablets. From Vancouver, and indeed around the world, friends and supporters informed us about the news, and about how they received the news through media like radio and TV, as well as social media like Facebook, Twitter and also public announcements and statements.

Legal Team Combined with Activism on the Ground: a Powerful Tool

This victory over the U.S. blockade of Cuba truly could not have been possible without the tremendous work of the IFCO/Pastors for Peace legal team with the help and advice of Linda Backiel, attorney for Pastors for Peace, and of course the direct intervention, coordination and leadership of Gail Walker, Co-director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace.

The very effective work of the legal team, combined with two of our organizers inside the U.S. Customs building as well as the ongoing protest on the both sides of the border crossing and of course a very strong presence of media, forced the border authorities to reverse their previous decision. At just about 2pm, after 24 hours of a battle of ideas, a battle for humanity, the truck full of humanitarian aid for Cuba passed the border. Cheers of victory filled the air all over the U.S. and Canada border locations. Cheering for victory and chanting "U.S. Hands Off Cuba!" with waving Cuban flags



and many picket signs for the Five Cuban Heroes all on the same line of the border for cars and trucks to see, created a space filled with the scent of justice and hope. Justice for the Cuban people and hope for releasing our 5 Cuban Heroes from U.S. jails and parole.

**It is only with fightback that we will win!
Hands Off Cuba!
Venceremos!**

Declaración Conjunta e Informe de los Grupos Ocupar Frontera:

Comunidades de Vancouver en
Solidaridad con Cuba y la Red de
Ayuda a Cuba en Columbia Británica

06 de julio 2012

**Traducido por Reynaldo Cruz Diaz*

En memoria de un verdadero luchador por la paz y la justicia social, el reverendo Lucius Walker, fundador de IFCO / Pastores por la Paz y el inspirador y fundador de la Caravana Pastores por la Paz a Cuba

**¡La victoria para la Caravana a Cuba!
¡Victoria para el pueblo cubano!
¡Victoria para la humanidad!**

Activistas de la caravana a Cuba de los Pastores por la Paz de Estados Unidos y Canadá, organizados por IFCO / Pastores por la Paz y grupos locales e individuos, se unieron para romper el bloqueo de EE.UU. contra Cuba -un camión de ayuda humanitaria previamente negada y rechazada por los funcionarios de aduanas de Estados Unidos está ahora camino a Cuba!

Gobierno de los EE.UU. reta a la Caravana a Cuba

El 20 aniversario este año de la Caravana a Cuba Pastores por la Paz ha comenzado y está rumbo a la victoria de una lucha exitosa contra el gobierno de EE.UU. en el cruce de fronteras de la Costa Oeste de Canadá / EE.UU.. Después de más de 24 horas de protesta continua y la resistencia de los Caravanistas y sus partidarios, sin el pago de una fianza impuesta por cualquier parte de la ayuda humanitaria, el camión, que había sido previamente negado su acceso, lleno de equipos médicos y deportivos con destino a Cuba cruzó con éxito a territorio de los EE.UU. en la tarde del lunes 2 de julio. Este camión es parte de la de Caravana a Cuba de los Pastores por la Paz, que desafía abiertamente la el bloqueo de viaje y comercio que de EE.UU. le ha impuesto a Cuba por más de 50 años.

Esta importante victoria para la Caravana fue corta pero intensa, la culminación de los eventos que comenzaron con el intento fallido de enviar la ayuda humanitaria a territorio de EE.UU. el domingo 1 de julio en el Cruce de Fronteras del Peace Arch (Arco de la Paz), en la frontera de Vancouver y el estado de Washington.

Desviado del primer intento, los manifestantes siguieron al camión al Cruce de Camiones Comerciales Pacific Highway, a pocos kilómetros de distancia, donde se hizo el segundo intento fallido de cruzar, más tarde en la noche. En ese momento, a los Caravanistas se les dijo que la ayuda no se dejaba pasar sin una fianza, y que las negociaciones se cerraban durante la noche. Los Caravanistas y activistas de la solidaridad con Cuba decidieron de inmediato ocupar la frontera hasta que sus demandas para la liberación de la ayuda humanitaria a los Estados Unidos se cumplieran.

Resistir, Organizar, Luchar

Cerca de 40 manifestantes en ambos lados del cruce, quienes originalmente fueron al cruce de la frontera del Peace Arch, comenzaron a cantar y agitando banderas cubanas. Mientras tanto, activistas de Vancouver montaron su primera tienda y cubrieron la valla y sus alrededores con banderas cubanas, pancartas exigiendo la liberación de los 5 Héroes Cubanos y carteles demandando que "levanten el bloqueo!" y "EE.UU. Manos Fuera de Cuba!" Ellos también pusieron un tablón grande de sandwich que decía "¡Toquen la bocina para Cuba, Dejen pasar la ayuda!"

Los manifestantes siguieron a ambos lados de la frontera cantando "Dejen pasar la ayuda", "Levanten el bloqueo a Cuba ya!", Y de "Estados Unidos, Manos Fuera de Cuba!" Con el fin de asegurarse de que las autoridades fronterizas de Estados Unidos entendieran que Caravanistas se tomaban en serio sus demandas y que sería una larga batalla, se formó una segunda oleada de tiendas, mesas, sillas, sacos de dormir, comida y un espacio para la difusión y los equipos de los medios de comunicación. Un generador se comenzó a suministrar energía a los distintos equipos de Occupy Border. A seguidas, se estableció la línea de comunicación con la Caravana a Cuba de los Pastores por la Paz en Nueva York y se planificó la siguiente línea de trabajo y acciones legales. Continuando en la noche y hasta el día siguiente, los activistas, mantuvieron el lugar de protesta en frente de la frontera de EE.UU. con un mensaje claro - ¡no nos vamos a ir hasta que nuestras

demandas se cumplan! A partir de apenas alrededor de la 1 am del lunes 2 de julio hasta el amanecer, los ocupantes escribieron un comunicado de prensa y las declaraciones y llamaron a una conferencia de prensa para el mismo día que se realizaría directamente en frente del cruce de la frontera, el lugar llamado Occupy Border.

Los caravanistas y sus seguidores no tuvieron opción, debido a las acciones de las

autoridades fronterizas de Estados Unidos, que resistir y desafiar esta exclusión hasta las consecuencias que fuesen necesarias. Estaba claro



para todo el mundo en Occupy Border que el bloqueo de la ayuda humanitaria es, por naturaleza, un acto para castigar a Cuba y a la Caravana a Cuba de los Pastores por la Paz. También es cierto que la retención de la Caravana en la frontera es parte del bloqueo político, económico y financiero que el gobierno de EE.UU. ha estado llevando a cabo e impuesto a Cuba desde hace más de 50 años. Sin embargo, la atmósfera de Occupy Border no tenía otra razón que resistir a la injusticia. El espíritu de lucha era alto y irrompible y declaramos muy claramente - ¡vamos a luchar hasta la victoria!

La Batalla de la Opinión Pública y Medios de Comunicación

El lunes a las 12 horas todos los grandes

medios de comunicación en Canadá asistieron a nuestra conferencia de prensa. Alrededor del 14 estaciones radio, televisión y periódicos cubrieron todo lo que queríamos que la gente del mundo escuchara - ¡levanten el bloqueo a Cuba, dejen pasar la ayuda! La presencia de los medios de comunicación a gran escala fue impresionante. Era obvio para las autoridades fronterizas de Estados Unidos que el caso ya no era local y que la presión llegaría más y más a nivel internacional. De hecho, en las siguientes 24 horas miles de artículos de la cobertura de noticias llegaron a través de medios de comunicación, Internet y activistas de las redes sociales. El mundo, desde Canadá hasta México y Ecuador, a Australia y China y Pakistán, y de Irán y Palestina, a Turquía y Alemania y España y Túnez y Gran Bretaña, vio cómo el gobierno de EE.UU. estaba tan desesperadamente bloqueando gorras de béisbol y balones de fútbol para mantener los más de 50 años de su bloqueo inhumano

y criminal hacia Cuba. Hemos derrotado al gobierno de EE.UU. y su bloqueo en batalla por la opinión pública, incluso antes de la ayuda humanitaria de la provincia de Columbia Británica en Canadá pasara a través de la frontera. Mientras los organizadores y activistas estaban tratando de ampliar el alcance de todo el mundo, los e-mails, llamadas y mensajes de texto se convirtieron en un flujo continuo en nuestros teléfonos,

computadoras y tabletas. Desde Vancouver, y de hecho en todo el mundo, amigos y simpatizantes nos informaron acerca de la noticia, y acerca de cómo recibieron la

noticia a través de los medios de comunicación como la radio y televisión, así como las redes sociales como Facebook, Twitter y también los anuncios públicos y declaraciones.

Equipo Jurídico Combinado con el activismo en el terreno: una herramienta de gran alcance

Esta victoria sobre el bloqueo de EE.UU. contra Cuba en verdad no podría haber sido posible sin el tremendo trabajo de

continúa en la página 31

Four Years After Stephen Harper's Hollow Apology:

Indian
Holocaust
1492 - ?

Deception Then, Deception Now

By Aaron Mercredi

I remember four years ago, when Prime Minister Stephen Harper was about to apologize on behalf of the Canadian government to the survivors of Canada's residential schools. Images of rooms in Native Friendship Centres across the country crowded with people waiting for something that was owed to them long ago. Standing in front of the House of Commons in front of federal politicians, the media, and the leaders of the major Indigenous organizations, on June 11, 2008, Harper delivered what many survivors needed to hear. However, while he played the remorseful part by choking back tears during his delivery, he missed mentioning that his government had no intention of changing Canada's shameful colonial relationship with Indigenous people, which the residential schools were born out of in the first place. But, why ruin the moment, right?

While survivors and the rest of people in Canada were told that this apology would bring a new beginning and forge real change for Canada's relationship to Indigenous people, the last four years have proven that the government's agenda of denying Indigenous people's rights and dignity have stayed its course.

Conditions on Reserves a Growing Crisis

Imagine some of those survivors as

residents of Attawapiskat, the small Cree community of 1800 people in Northern Ontario. What should they think of Harper's comments when his government literally left them out in the cold. In October 2011, a state of emergency was declared for the third time in three years in that community in response to dropping temperatures and the health and safety concerns from inadequate housing. Because of government neglect, community members were living in makeshift plywood sheds, enduring sub-zero temperature without insulation. The Canadian

attracted international media to expose the mess under Canada's rug, and United Nations special rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous people intervened to address the government's inaction over the crisis, the government moved swiftly to place the blame squarely on mismanagement by the First Nation band council, and sent in a third party manager to oversee the community. Attawapiskat's state of emergency is still in effect today. There is still a crisis with their housing situation as community members continue to live in temporary housing units which were

brought in as only a temporary solution. We may have to wait until the next winter cold comes before the government is pushed to deal with the next crisis.

Attawapiskat was only a glimpse in to the reality facing many Native reserves. Infrastructure, mould, and lack of sanitation systems plague reserves across the country. It is estimated that more than 120 Indigenous communities are under a drinking water advisory.

In 2011, the federal government released a report stating that \$490 Million would be needed annually over the next ten years to help clean up the water supply on reserves. Despite that, their new budget split only \$330 over two years. Coupled with the rampant poverty that exists in Indigenous communities, the situation is so bad across the country that in 2004, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), studied and applied the United Nations Human Development Index to

Montreal protest against cuts to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation which funded over 130 programs for Residential School survivors across Canada, 2010.



Red Cross was even called in with humanitarian aid to meet the drastic needs of the community.

The government response demonstrated Canada's unchanging approach towards Indigenous people. Despite the long history of squalor living conditions and numerous government visits, Aboriginal Affairs Minister John Duncan claimed that officials in his department were unaware of the housing problems until the state of emergency was declared! Once the crisis

Native reserves in Canada. While Canada ranked 4th place, the average ranking for First Nations reserves would have placed them 68th on that list of 186 countries. Today, their ranking would be somewhere around 74th place.

Effects Run Deep

Obviously, these living conditions are having an effect on the overall well-being of Indigenous people. From health to education and employment, Indigenous people fare much worse than non-Indigenous people. For example, the extremely high levels of tuberculosis prevalent among Indigenous people is directly related to poverty and cramped living conditions. In 2010, the Public Health Agency of Canada released figures showing the TB rate among status Indians is 31 times higher than that of non-Indigenous Canadians. Even more alarmingly, the Inuit of Northern Canada who often live in isolated communities, have an infection rate of 185 times the national average. In May, another state of emergency, this time on Vancouver Island, attracted national attention as the Cowichan First Nation was asking for help to deal with the drastic level of suicides and attempts in that community (more than 276 in 2010).

For Native youth, the conditions of growing up with the legacy of residential schools and under these conditions laid a heavy impact on them. According to the 2009 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada, unemployment rates of Aboriginal youth were at least twice as high as non-Aboriginal youth in the Western provinces. School dropouts are as high as 70 percent, and while Indigenous people make up just over 3 percent of the Canadian population, they make up more than 20 percent of jail and prison populations.

Same Response to the Crisis

Given the ongoing crisis facing Native people and this so-called 'new path' between government and Indigenous people, one would expect Canada to step in. Not only did they not help, layers of government have systematically cut services to Indigenous people that are there to help them. In April, the government cut funding to the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO). Founded in 2000, NAHO oversaw many research

and outreach programs, in crucial fields such as suicide prevention, tobacco cessation, housing and midwifery; issues that statistics show are critical to Indigenous people across Canada. The Conservative government also cut the Native Women's Association of Canada's one million dollar budget to provide health services for Aboriginal women. The Conservatives also cut the \$22 Million of federal fund-

in the approval processes for major resource development projects. As one of its components, it will also gut the environmental protection provisions of the current Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Indigenous people already have to fight tooth and nail in order to even be heard by the companies that come in to their territories. These new provisions now make it harder for them to protect their title, rights, and treaty rights to the benefit of third party interests.

The Canadian government has a hard time taking criticism for its actions against Indigenous people and today is no exception. Because of the opposition among many Indigenous nations to the exploitation of their land by resource mega-projects, they were labelled a potential 'terrorist threat' and many leaders, activists and organizations were spied on by the Canadian Forces' National Counter-Intelligence Unit. When the UN right-to-food envoy Oliver de Schutter arrived in Canada for an official visit where he addressed the staggering food crisis that exists among Inuit in Canada's North, instead of meeting with him, the government worked at discrediting him in the media just as they had done when the UN special rapporteur on Indigenous rights visited about At-tawapiskat. The message from the government is clear: if you oppose or even question our policies, you will be taken to task.

A Lie Told More Than Once

Harper's residential school apology had the same intention as Canada's so-called historic signing of the UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Canada was one of only four countries to originally vote against it, and only had a change of heart once it established that the declaration was non-binding and wouldn't at all improve the rights of Indigenous people within Canada. They did it to save face. The Prime Minister now champions these two 'achievements' as the hard work of his government. But, for all the Native people affected by neglect, cuts, and attacks over the last four years, these 'achievements' are known to be worthless. The government cannot preach reconciliation without bringing justice deserved.



ing to the Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth (CCAY), which supports at-risk Native youth. The list goes on, but is enough of an indication Harper and the Conservative government is not the least bit concerned with the complete deterioration of critical services for Indigenous people. If you follow the path that Harper has been leading, it is clear that his government is leading an offensive on the well-being of Indigenous people in this country.

This offensive goes far beyond the reaches of budgets and funding to the historic colonial interest in Indigenous people: their land and resources. When the Conservatives rushed in their Omnibus Bill C-38, it imposed a series of new regulations and policies that will alter opportunities for First Nations to examine and be engaged

Mariela Castro:

"U.S. government is 'concerned' about LGBT movement in Cuba"



By Aday del Sol Reyes (CubaSi)

Mariela Castro Espin, director of the National Center for Sex Education (CEN-ESEX), grants an exclusive interview to CubaSi where she explains the educational work carried out by this institution.

Bachelor of Psychology-Pedagogy and Master of Sexuality, Mariela Castro is known internationally as a champion of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) rights in Cuba, joined social networks and created an account on twitter, @CastroEspinM and the blog <http://elblogdemarielacastro.blogspot.com> in order to dismantle the prejudices that have been historically established and banish homophobia.

INTERVIEW:

- You said "the Revolution has changed not only the lives of Cubans but also their sexuality" in a meeting with U.S. students last November. Why?

The Cuban Revolution meant not only the achievement of the long-awaited national sovereignty, but also a complex process of creating and implementing the project of justice, social equity and solidarity that has been built and defended during these 53 years.

This scenario led to the confrontation and dialogue between generations, cultural patterns, classes and social strata. Old paradigms of power based on domination and exploitation, inherited from Spanish colonial system and the U.S. neocolonialism, were questioned.

Undoubtedly, this process has generated radical and deep changes in our culture, our prejudices about sexuality, in the relation of domination of men over women, in the reconfiguration of courting, in sexual politics that privilege heterosexual relationships and exclude other forms of erotic and love relationships between human beings,

which deny certain rights to those who do not meet these parameters.

Cuban cinematography and other artistic expressions have portrayed from a very creative point of view the vicissitudes of men and women for the development of these changes.

For example, the over-rated criteria of virginity and its contributing factor to marriage have been transformed. The same has happened with the imposition of a couple for the rest of our

disqualification for single mothers and single women, women's rights, a disapproval to transgender people, gay and bisexual, among others.

- What is the status of the analysis of the bill calling for the legalization of gay marriage? Would the new Family Code recognize their property and personal rights besides allowing transsexuals' change of identity?

At present, the draft bill proposal to amend the Family Code is being subjected to the criterion of specialists from the Ministry of Justice and professionals affiliated with the National Union of Jurists of Cuba. According to the Minister of Justice, its discussion in our Parliament is included in the legislative plan of 2012. I believe that the Party Conference may help to define a policy explicitly prohibiting discrimination

on sexual orientation and gender identity and, in turn, help to dismantle the prejudices that hinder its adoption. The purpose of these proposals corresponds to



Mariela Castro and other Cubans participate in events to mark the International Day Against Homophobia. May 15, 2010, Havana, Cuba.

life, the sole responsibility of men as head of family, the loyalty standard of women and infidelity in men, the rejection of race relations, the myths of menstruation, the



Cubans celebrate International Day Against Homophobia in Havana, Cuba. May 12, 2012

the need to recognize and protect the rights of our population.

With regard to facilitating the legal identity change for transgender people without surgical intervention (as it happens now), we presented, through the Federation of Cuban Women, in 2008, a draft decree-law of Gender Identity to the President of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs of the People's National Assembly. There is no information on the development of this legislative initiative yet.

The proposal has an inclusive character for all transgender persons, identified by a specialized Commission of the Ministry of Public Health, since not all can be performed a surgery because of their health or personal decisions.

On occasion of your visit to Holland, you wrote on your twitter account @CastroEspinoM "There exists in Cuba an explicit policy of care not only over prostitution but also over transactional sex, which is individualized". Could you explain this?

Regarding prostitution topic, I start from the conviction that the autonomy over the body of all persons should be respected as a right. However, sex market has not disappeared thanks to the prevalence of forms of social organization based on patriarchal and class exploitation systems among human beings.

Some of its expressions are hard to make visible because the efforts of governments are focused on the most traditional and explicit interpretations, such as prostitution

and human trafficking. These cases include transactional sex that refers to women and men who get some benefit from sex practice, which is not necessarily money. It has always existed, but it is only now that we talk about this phenomenon and in Latin America it is closely related to sex tourism, which has an own logic.

In Cuba, since 1959, the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) led the attention to the problems generated by prostitution as a form of exploitation, mainly toward women, who were also underprivileged not only for their gender status, but for race and social class reasons as well.

It is known that there were more than 100,000 prostitutes in very precarious and humiliating conditions, who have expressed in public testimonies, how the Revolution changed their life, by benefiting them and favoring their prominence within a great liberating process which contributed to dignify them.

The work done by the Revolution to eradicate prostitution is a matter of national pride. The crisis that began in 1990 favored its reappearance as a social problem with new characteristics, especially linked to the development of international tourism and a consistent presence of customers who pay for sexual services and generate this market. Therefore, she praised the Swedish experience of penalising the customer, which has proved effective in the reduction of sexual exploitation.

-How many sex change operations have been performed in Cuba so far and in

response to what requirements is the selection made?

There have been 15 sex reassignment surgeries. The first was carried out by Cuban specialists in 1988. But it was not until 2007 that this procedure was retaken by the Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP).

There exists a National Commission for Comprehensive Care of Transsexual People that has received 175 requests from trans population since 1979 and they are assisted according to internationally agreed parameters. As long as we divulge these services in the media, there will come more people who experience the conflict and do not know they can receive help.

Until now, trans people should go through a two-year follow-up period in which they are accompanied by specialists, along with a personalized hormone treatment, during the transition to the gender with which they identify themselves. At the end of this process, the Commission endorses the people who are eligible and are apt for the sex reassignment surgery (popularly known as "sex change") and for the legal change of identify.

This surgery is not an aesthetic whim, but a procedure scientifically agreed on worldwide, which shows a considerable benefit for the welfare of trans people. The surgical procedure contributes to ease the permanent anguish that these people have lived since their early childhood, as a result of the prejudices that lead to incomprehension and discrimination.

- What's your opinion on the confirmation by WikiLeaks on the financing (\$300. 000) the U.S government has established for the subversion of the LGBT project in Cuba?

In the first place, this explicit reaction on behalf of the U.S. government demonstrates that the work carried out in Cuba for the rights of the lesbians, gays, bisexual, transsexual, and intersex (LGBTI) worries and occupies them, in time and resources. Why? Because it shows the Cuban government's political will to face homophobia and transphobia as forms of discrimination, which are not consistent with the emancipating project defended by the Cuban revolution.

What we are doing tears apart the worn-out media campaigns to discredit the spirituality of the revolutionary project and makes evident the resources of North American taxpayers dedicated to lie, slander, demonize, and collapse this changing experience and its leaders.

They have set their efforts in giving privilege to a few unauthentic voices, repeating them in traditional media, blogs and social networks that follow a spiteful misleading program with a pre-established script.

Strong evidences have been presented on the orders received by these mercenaries, on behalf of the U.S. Interest Section in Havana. Some of these evidences were published by WikiLeaks.

Many people who have been eye witness of the facts and later read the news which have been broadly spread can appreciate the gross way of manipulating the international public opinion in largely influential press media like the Spanish CNN, El País, Der Spiegel, Radio Nederland, among others.

- Several steps have been taken in Cuba to promote the respect to the free and responsible sexual orientation and gender identity, however, these are not enough yet. In your opinion which is the path to follow to get to the hearts of all Cubans and banish, once and for all, the

homophobia in our country.

The first steps were taken by the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), with the creation of the National Group of Work on Sexual Education in year 1972, forerunner of CENESEX.

The FMC also propitiated a public debate on these topics. A landmark moment was the publication of the book "Man and Woman in Intimacy" (Sigfred Schnabel, 1979), in which a scientific voice argued, for the first time in Cuba, why homo-

sexuality from its manual of classification of mental illnesses.

From this experience in 2008 we begin to work with an educational strategy, with the support of the media, for the respect to the free and responsible sexual orientation and gender identity.

These activities have been supported by several state institutions and organizations of the civil society, with the support of the Ideological Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, and they have contributed to create a LGBTIH movement, with the peculiarity of including heterosexual people who actively participate in this cause.

- Why do we choose an educational and communicative strategy?

Because it's about a deep process of cultural transformation, of contrib-

uting with analysis elements to dismantle the prejudices that have been established historically to dominate people, their sexualities and their bodies. The change in the social awareness is really complex and takes a lot of time, but there must be a political will to enable the change, otherwise we would be repeating the ways of thinking of the exploitative societies before us.

- How much of Vilma is there in Mariela?

The permanent opposition to all expressions of social injustice. The commitment with the revolutionary process that has been generated since the first emancipating reactions of our people which became mature in the struggle for the definitive independence of the Cuban nation. The sincerity, the dissent, the humility, and the persistency.

Cubasi Translation Staff

http://www.cubasi.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1318:mariela-castro-%E2%80%99Cus-government-is-concerned-about-lgbt-movement-in-cuba%E2%80%9D



sexuality is not considered a disease.

Many homosexual people have told me the benefits these messages meant to them, against stigmatizing burden society imposes on them.

Exactly after assessing the actions we have carried out are not enough, in year 2007 we joined the initiative of the French activist Georges Tin of celebrating the International Day against Homophobia on May 17, because in that date of 1990 the World Health Organization (WHO) eliminated

Mariela Castro:

“Al gobierno de EE.UU. le ‘preocupa y ocupa’ el movimiento LGBT de Cuba”

Por Aday del Sol Reyes (CubaSí)

Sobre el trabajo educativo que durante décadas ha llevado a cabo el Centro Nacional de Educación Sexual, Mariela Castro Espín accedió a conceder una entrevista exclusiva para CubaSí.

La Habana será escenario del 23 al 26 de enero próximo del VI Congreso de Sexología, en su sede habitual del Palacio de Convenciones, bajo el lema “La educación sexual en los procesos de transformación social”.

A propósito de este evento y sobre el trabajo educativo que durante décadas ha llevado a cabo el Centro Nacional de Educación Sexual (CENESEX), Mariela Castro Espín, directora de ese centro, accedió a conceder una entrevista exclusiva para CubaSí.

Licenciada en Psicología-Pedagogía y Máster en Sexualidad Mariela Castro es reconocida internacionalmente como figura activa en la defensa de los derechos de las personas lesbianas, gays, bisexuales, transexuales e intersex (LGBTI) en Cuba.

Desde noviembre pasado, la hija del presidente cubano Raúl Castro, se incorporó a las redes sociales, al abrir una cuenta en twitter, @CastroEspinM y el blog <http://elblogdemarielaCastro.blogspot.com>, como una vía más para desarticular los prejuicios que se han establecido históricamente y desterrar la homofobia.

- En un encuentro con estudiantes de universidades estadounidenses, en noviembre pasado usted expresó que, “la revolución ha cambiado no solo la vida de los cubanos sino también su sexualidad”. ¿Por qué?

La Revolución cubana significó no solamente el logro de la tan anhelada soberanía nacional, sino también un complejo proceso de creación y puesta en práctica del

proyecto de justicia, equidad social y solidaridad que se ha construido y defendido durante estos 53 años. Este escenario propició la confrontación y el diálogo entre generaciones, patrones culturales, clases y estratos sociales; fueron cuestionados los viejos paradigmas de poder basados en la dominación y la explotación, heredados del sistema colonial español y el neocolonial de los Estados Unidos.

Sin dudas, este proceso ha generado transformaciones profundas y radicales en nuestra cultura, en los prejuicios sobre las sexualidades, en las relaciones de dominación de los hombres sobre las mujeres, en la reconfiguración de los vínculos de enamoramiento y de pareja, en las políticas sexuales que privilegian las relaciones heterosexuales y excluyen otras formas de vivir las relaciones amorosas y eróticas entre los seres humanos, que privan de algunos derechos a quienes no cumplan con estos parámetros.



La cinematografía cubana y otras expresiones artísticas han recogido de una manera muy creativa las vicisitudes de hombres y de mujeres, en diferentes edades, para la elaboración de estos cambios.

Por ejemplo, han transformado los criterios que sobrevaloraban la virginidad y su carácter condicionante para el matrimonio, la imposición de la pareja para toda la vida, la responsabilidad exclusiva del hombre como proveedor y jefe de familia, la normalizada fidelidad de las mujeres e infidelidad de los hombres, el rechazo a las relaciones interraciales, los mitos de la menstruación, la descalificación a las madres solas y a las mujeres solteras, los derechos de las mujeres, la reprobación a las personas transgéneros, de homosexuales y bisexuales, entre otras.

- ¿En qué estado se encuentra el análisis del proyecto de ley que pide la legalización de la unión entre homosexuales, y reconocería en el nuevo Código de Familia sus derechos patrimoniales y personales, además de permitir el cambio de identidad para los transexuales?

En estos momentos, la propuesta de anteproyecto para la modificación del Código de Familia está siendo sometida al criterio de especialistas del Ministerio

continúa en la página 25

Palestinians and Israelis, Two Fronts Burning the Zionist State

By Thomas Davies

In Memory of Moshe Silman, Who Died for Social Justice!

The news spread faster than the flames which had engulfed the body of the 57 year old Israeli man who lit himself on fire at a rally marking the one year anniversary of the "Social Justice" protest movement which has shaken Israel. Hundreds of thousands of Israeli's have taken to the streets, and if doubts remained among sceptics regarding the explosive and polarized situation in Israel, let them be laid to rest with the scarred body of this Israeli man driven to desperation by it all. Moshe Silman did not leave the world quietly, and his dying words will haunt Israeli politicians trying to cover it all up with the white and blue of the Israeli flag – but the deeper questions of inequality and occupation cannot be left alone.

Mr. Silman left no doubts as to who was responsible for the suffering. In the copies of the suicide note he distributed, some still wet with the gasoline he used to light himself, he wrote,

"I blame the State of Israel, I blame [Prime Minister] Bibi Netanyahu, and [Minister of Finance] Yuval Steinitz, both scum, for the humiliation that disenfranchised citizens go through day in and day out, that take from the poor and give to the rich..."

Moshe Silman should have been the example Israel's public relations department dreams up. The son of Holocaust survivors, he was an entrepreneur until because of a small debt to the National Insurance Institute, a truck he used for his

messenger business was seized. He was eventually forced out of his apartment and had his attempt to sue the Institute for damages thrown out because he could not pay the court fees. His bank account was seized, and his mother's assets and his drivers license were also taken. He soon had a stroke which left him disabled and unable to work. It also turns out the debt notices had all been sent to the wrong address by the Institute before they started the whole obscene process in



Moshe Silman. Tel Aviv, Israel. July 14, 2012.



Tel Aviv, August 6, 2012

the first place. Moshe Silman had been one week away from being homeless.

Welcome to Israel, where protestors outside of Moshe Silman's hospital held up signs which said, "We have flammable potential too!" and already Micky Rosenfield, a disabled and indebted war veteran, is in hospital after setting himself on fire at a bus stop in Yehud. His brother lamented his treatment by the military, "...the army loves you three feet under, but doesn't love you when you're wounded."

Walk like an Egyptian

At first it was easier to dismiss the wave of discontent in Israeli

society. Tunisians had already overthrown their longtime dictator Ben Ali and mass protests in Egypt had forced Hosni Mubarak to resign several months earlier by the time Israelis started a largescale boycott of cottage cheese to protest the rising cost of food and other essentials in June of 2011. At the same time, Israeli financial newspaper Globes reported that when measured relative to average income, Israeli's pay double what Americans do in gas and have the highest post-secondary fees in all of Europe.

That same month Daphni Leef, a 25 year old Tel Aviv resident received notice to vacate the apartment she had lived in for the past three years. After weeks of fruitless searching for an affordable place to live, she pitched a tent on Rothschild Boulevard and invited others to do the same. Hundreds of people joined her, and more "tent cities" sprouted up across Israel. No wonder, Tel Aviv Councilman Noah Efron reported that housing prices had increased over 65% in that city in the last 5 years. The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics also reported that average rents in all of Israel had increased by 35% between 2004 and 2010.

Given this reality, the protests grew from 30,000 to 150,000 to 350,000 across Israel by August 8, 2011. The protest defied the sceptics, and were reinforced by other actions like the "stroller protests" where parents would march with their infants, and the protests of doctors against the deteriorating medical system. While the right-wing was almost too busy dismissing



"Freedom for all!" Protest at Tel Aviv Stock Exchange. August, 2011.



"Walk Like an Egyptian" Tel Aviv protest, August 2011.

the protests as elitist and insignificant, 460,000 people took to the streets on September 3rd, 2011 with 300,000 in Tel Aviv alone. That's the equivalent of over 2 million people in Canada or more than 18 million in the United States, in one day!

The main slogans of the huge marches is *"Ha'am doresh tzedek chevrati!"* which translates to, *"The people demand social justice!"* Protesters carry signs which say things like, *"The government against the people, the people against the government"*, and *"We demand public housing"*. Probably the one sign which worried Israel's leaders the most was more creative, *"Walk like an Egyptian"* - a refreshing acknowledgement of the example set by the protests in the Middle East and North Africa.

Deep Inequality, Deep Divisions

So where did all the people marching on the streets come from? According to the most common measure of inequality in countries, the "GINI Index", Israel is second only to the United States as *the most unequal country in the world*. Israeli economist Shir Hever also documented that 18 families in Israel control roughly 60 percent of the equity value of all companies in Israel. This would help explain why a quarter of Israelis live under the poverty line, according to the annual poverty report published by the National Insurance Institute (yes, the same National Insurance Institute responsible for the woes of Moshe Silman).

Not all protests have been positive though. In May, a veritable lynch mob of over 1000 violently attacked African migrants in Tel Aviv. This kind of behaviour isn't just

isolated, but encouraged by the government. Danny Dannon, member of the Israeli parliament (the Knesset) for the Likud Party of Prime Minister Netanyahu, was part of the anti-immigrant mob. How could he not have been aware of the similarities between his message and that of the Nazi party against Jews when he said, *"The infiltrators must be distanced immediately. We must expedite the construction of temporary detention facilities and remove Africans from population centres."* This is the man chosen to be the Chairman of the Immigration, Absorption and Diaspora Affairs Committee in the Knesset! Arson and unprovoked street attacks have become common place against non-white Israelis.

The Crisis Continues

The Israeli government has been in a prolonged crisis. Beyond being one of the most unequal and racist countries in the world, it has other factors which amplify its crisis. A unity government between the Likud and Kadima party fell apart after just two months. When the coalition had been formed, its stated objectives were to pass a



Banner says, "GO!" like the popular banners in Egypt's Tahrir Square, "EGYPT IS HERE", Tel Aviv, August 2011

budget, create sustainable electoral reform, move forward with a "peace process" with Palestinians, and to pass a new draft law. It failed on all four.

The issue of the draft into the Israeli military has become a particularly sticky subject as Israel's economy deteriorates.

Under normal circumstance, all Israelis over 18 years of age must serve in the Israeli Defence Force (IDF). 3 years for a man and 2 years for a woman. However, according to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, *"Beginning this year, and for the next three years, the number of inductees to the Israel Defense Forces is expected to drop*

substantially."

This has meant increased debate on the exceptions to conscription, mostly importantly *"Israeli-Arabs"* (Palestinians with Israeli citizenship) and Haredim, or ultra-orthodox Jews who are not required to serve in the military, technically as long as they continue to study the Torah, but practically forever. The issue boiled over after the Supreme Court invalidated a law that granted draft exemptions to Haredi Jews.

Many Israeli commentators point to something deeper than the military service - a large and growing part of the population which is less and less educated and less economically productive - the Haredi because of favoritism, and the Arab Israelis because of exclusion.

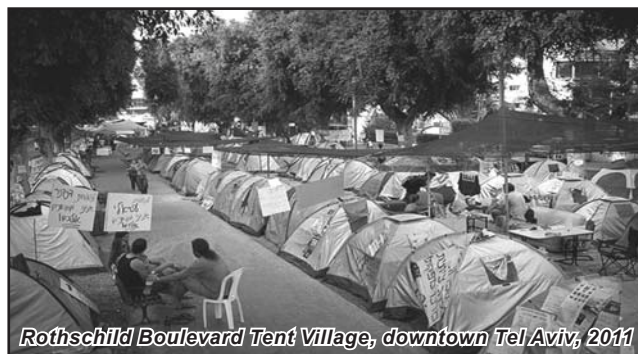
Writing for Haaretz, Dan Ben David observed in his article, *"Israel's Moment of Truth"*,

"The education provided to Arab Israeli children is reflected in achievements below those of children in Third World countries like Jordan and Tunisia. The Haredi boys do not even study any core curriculum subjects after 8th grade,"

"Already today, Arab and Haredi children comprise about half the pupils in Israel's primary school system,"

"Today's children are tomorrow's adults. Children whose scholastic achievements in core subject areas are below those of children in every one of the First World countries will find it very difficult to reduce the productivity gaps between the First World and Israel that have been steadily growing since the 1970s - and this refers to the children who are receiving the best education in Israel."

"As for the Arab Israeli children, the problem is not a lack of interest in education, but rather a lack of in the additional resources that the country needs to provide to ensure these children receive what their parents are sometimes unable to give them."



Rothschild Boulevard Tent Village, downtown Tel Aviv, 2011

The entire situation leads us to the two fundamental problems with Israel today:

1) The state of Israel is founded on the occupation of Palestine, on the continued ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from their land, and of the continued sacrifice of everything: human rights, productivity, common sense, to maintain the "Jewish character" of the Israeli Zionist state.

2) The state of Israel would never have existed, and would not exist today without the financial and military backing of imperialist powers who use Israel as giant outpost in a strategically important area.

Occupation Occupation Occupation

"We must expel Arabs and take their places."
David Ben Gurion, future Prime Minister of Israel, 1937

An entire history of the Israeli occupation of Palestine requires a separate article, but certain basic facts are relevant to the current discussion:

- The state of Israel was proclaimed by a United Nations mandate in 1948 in an area already inhabited by Palestinians. In establishing themselves on the land, Israeli forces killed an estimated 13,000 Palestinians and forcibly evicted 737,166 Palestinians from their homes and land. Five hundred and thirty one Palestinian villages were entirely depopulated and destroyed.

- When the West Bank and Gaza Strip were further occupied by Israel in 1967, the UN reported that approximately 200,000 Palestinians were forced to flee their homes.

- One in three refugees world wide is Palestinian. There are about 7.2 million Palestinian refugees worldwide. According to international law, refugees have the right to return to their homes of origin or choose compensation for their loss.



Ethiopian Jews protest racism in Israel

- Israel refuses to allow the "Right of Return" to Palestinian refugees

- Israel does however, have a "Law of Return" which basically allows any "spouse of a Jew, the children of a Jew and their spouses, and the grandchildren of a Jew and their spouses" the right to Israeli citizenship no matter where they come from or how disconnected from that area they are.

Israel defines itself as a "Jewish and Democratic State", but in practise extending and defending a Jewish population majority, and Jewish control of the land and economy has meant the "democratic" aspects are

"The government against the people, the people against the government." Palestinian Israelis join the protests.



disregarded when they are seen to conflict with the "Jewish" character, which is every day.

It is no mistake that Palestinians living in Israel constitute 22% of the population but own only 2.5% of the land. It is no mistake that, that their unemployment rates are about double that of Jewish Israelis, which means approximately 14 percent official unemployment and about 36 percent if you consider those who are employed cannot meet their basic needs or have given up looking for work. It's no mistakes that Palestinians in Israel make up only 6 percent of civil servants. All this occurs to maintain the



Israelis chanting, "The people want the Africans to be burned!" after anti-immigration march and Tel Aviv, May 23, 2012

"Jewish character" of the Israeli state. These statistics do not even include the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, which has at least 45% unemployment under Israeli occupation.

The original sin, however, must always be recognized as the expulsion of Palestinians from their lands and the denial of their right to return. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said in his most recent meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama that accepting Palestinian refugees would mean "wiping out Israel's future as a Jewish state." He continued, "The Palestinian refugee problem has to be resolved...But it's not going to be resolved within the Jewish state."

So Israel acknowledges the refugees, acknowledges the problem, but refuses to honour their human rights because it would jeopardize a "Jewish state"? It seems as though the word democratic was expelled along with the Palestinians.

American Outpost

Israel receives about \$3.1 billion in military aid grants from the U.S. every year, which works out to 8.2 million dollars every day. The U.S. Government Congressional Research Service also released an interesting report in March 12, 2012 titled, "U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel". Some of its findings:

"Israel is the largest cumulative recipient of U.S. foreign assistance since World War II. To date, the United States has provided Israel \$115 billion in bilateral assistance..."

"Annual Foreign Military Financing grants to Israel represent 18% to 22% of the overall Israeli defense budget..."

"The United States stores missiles, armoured vehicles and artillery ammunition in Israel... During the 2006 war against Hezbollah in Lebanon, the United States granted Israel access to the stockpile. The initial value of



Obama and Netanyahu in the White House. March 6, 2012

is in its foreign policy interests to essentially have a giant military base to operate from and destabilize the region. Israel became even more important when the U.S. lost its other proxy in the Middle East, Iran, after their Revolution in 1979.

Israel now spends 6.2% of its gross domestic product on the military, compared to 1.9% for Iran or 4.8% for the United States.

What happens to a dream deferred?

"What happens to a dream deferred? / Does it dry up/ like a raisin in the sun? / Or fester like a sore-- / And then run? / Does it stink like rotten meat? / Or crust and sugar over-- / like a syrupy

the U.S. materiel stored in Israel was set at \$100 million. It increased over, time to \$800 million in 2010."

Not in the report, but also important is the fact that the U.S. has vetoed 42 United Nations Security resolutions critical of Israel.

Why such intense support for Israel? Let us ask the U.S. itself. In November 2011, Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Andrew J. Shapiro stated:

"...we don't just support Israel because of a long standing bond, we support Israel because it is in our national interests to do so. This aspect of our relationship with Israel is often overlooked. America's commitment to Israel's security and prosperity has extended over many decades because our leaders on both sides of the aisle have long understood that a robust United States-Israel security relationship is in our interests. Our support for Israel's security helps preserve peace and stability in the region. If Israel were weaker, its enemies would be bolder. This would make broader conflict more likely, which would be catastrophic to American interests in the region."

We have seen the "peace and stability" the U.S. promotes in its occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, but the key point is that the U.S. supports Israel because it



sweet? / Maybe it just sags / like a heavy load. / Or does it explode?"



— Black American civil rights poet Langston Hughes, 1951

The Israeli government has no interest in challenging the occupation of Palestine and the oppression of Palestinians, because its cheques are signed and orders dictated in Washington,

DC. The unfolding situation is that this has caused conditions in Israel for the Jewish population to fester and deteriorate to a point that they are coming onto the street as well. However, as long as the Social Justice movement does not confront the issue of occupation and Palestinian self-determination it can never really achieve anything resembling Social Justice. As long as the majority of the land's inhabitants are directly excluded from their homes, and a further 22% live as second class citizens what kind of social justice can there be?

The vital part is the possibility that these poor and working Israelis will realize they have more in common with poor and working Palestinians who are also oppressed by the Israeli and U.S. governments and their big business allies. Further more this poor and working Israelis will then discover that they have millions of potential new co-fighters in the real fight for dignity and justice not only in Israel, but in the whole occupied Palestine and the entire region. That's when the real change will start to happen for all Israeli people.

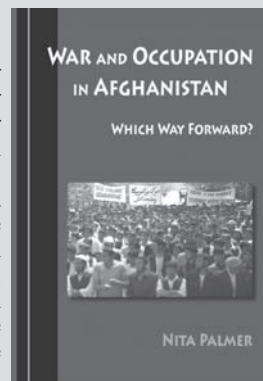
Battle of Ideas Press

WAR & OCCUPATION IN AFGHANISTAN WHICH WAY FORWARD?

BY NITA PALMER

"The problem of Afghanistan boils down to just two words: foreign occupation. The Canada/US/ NATO occupation forces claim that corruption, poverty, drug production, the presence of the Taliban and other social or political crises are the fundamental problems of Afghanistan which they must fix. The irony of this claim is that the same occupation forces have proven themselves completely incapable of fixing these problems or of bettering the lives of Afghan people"

Nita Palmer is an author and researcher on the war in Afghanistan. She is a member of the editorial board of Vancouver, Canada-based social justice newspaper Fire This Time.



January 2010, paperback, 155 pages, illustrated, \$7.00
ISBN 978-0-9864716-0-5 | Copyright © 2010 by Battle of Ideas Press
PO Box 21607, Vancouver, BC, V5L 5G3, Canada

WWW.BATTLEOFIDEASPRESS.COM
INFO@BATTLEOFIDEASPRESS.COM



The filmed scenes of the massacre in Libya, starting to be seen, offend for their total absence of humanism and the crass lies that served as an excuse for invading and taking over the natural resources of that country.

With more than 25,000 combat missions, NATO air forces backed up the monstrous crime.

They stated that the Libyan government had funds abroad exceeding 200 billion dollars. At this time, nobody knows where the money is nor what has been done with it.

A fraudulent electoral process ensured the overthrowing of the presidency of the most powerful country on the side of George W. Bush, an alcoholic without medical treatment nor the most basic ethical principles, who ordered West Point graduates to be ready to attack without warning 60 or more dark corners of the world.

Such a deranged person, with the use of a small black briefcase, could decide on the use of thousands of nuclear weapons; with a minimal percentage of these, he could put an end to human life on the planet.

It is sad to remember that on the opposite side of the Yankee super-power, another deranged person, with three bottles of vodka in his stomach, declared the disintegration of the USSR and the dismantling of more than 400 nuclear bases in whose range were all the military bases threatening that country.

Those events did not constitute any surprise. Throughout many years of struggle, experience garnered, contact with events, ideas and historical processes did not come as a surprise.

Today the Russian leaders are trying to rebuild this powerful State which had been created with so much effort and sacrifice.

When Pope John Paul II visited our country in 1998, more than once before his arrival I talked about several subjects with one or another of his envoys. I es-

THE NEED TO ENRICH OUR KNOWLEDGE

pecially remember the occasion when we sat down to dinner in a small room in the Palace of the Revolution with Joaquín Navarro Valls, Papal spokesman, sitting in front of me. To the right was a pleasant and intelligent priest who had come with the spokesman and assisted Pope John Paul II at the Masses.

Curious about the details, I asked Navarro Valls whether he thought that the immense sky with its millions of stars had been made to please the inhabitants of the earth whenever we deigned to look upwards on any given night. "Absolutely" he replied. "It is the only inhabited planet in the universe".

I then turned to the priest and said: what do you think of that, Father? He replied: "In my opinion, there is a 99.9 percent possibility of intelligent life existing on some other planet". The answer did not violate any religious principle. Mentally



Introduction of new computer technologies into the Cuban educational system

I multiplied the figure, who knows how many times. It was the kind of answer that I deemed to be correct and serious.

Afterwards, that noble priest was always friendly with our country. Sharing a friendship does not mean you have to share beliefs.

Today, on Thursday, as it happens with increasing frequency, a European entity with well-known solvency in the subject, textually states:

"There could be billions of planets not much larger than the Earth orbiting around weak stars in our galaxy, according to an international team of astronomers.

"This estimated number of 'super-Earths' -planets with up to ten times Earth's mass - is based on detections already made and then extrapolated to include the population of the so-called 'dwarf stars' in the

Milky Way."

"Our new observations with HARPS show that around 40% of the red dwarf stars have a 'super-Earth' orbiting around it in its habitable zone, where there may be water in a liquid state on the surface of the planet", stated Xavier Bonfils, team leader at the Sciences of the Universe Observatory in Grenoble, France.

"Due to the fact that the red dwarfs are so common - there are around 160 billion of them in the Milky Way - this brings us to the surprising results that there are tens of millions of those planets in our galaxy alone'."

"Their studies suggest that there are 'super-Earths' in habitable zones in 41% of the cases, with a range of 28 to 95%.

"40% of the red dwarf stars have a 'super-Earth' orbiting them in their habitable zone, where water in its liquid state may exist'."

"That leads to the obvious question about whether any of those planets may not only be habitable but may also have life."

"But these stars are prone to stellar eruptions, that can wash over the neighbouring planets with X-rays or ultra-violet radiation, making it less likely that life may exist there.

"We have an idea about how to find traces of life on those planets", stated Stephane Udry, researcher at the Observatory of Geneva."

"If we are able to see traces of elements related to life such as oxygen in that light, then we can obtain indications about whether there is life on that planet'."

Simply reading these news items shows the possibility and the necessity we have of enriching our knowledge which today is fragmented and scattered.

Perhaps it takes us to more critical positions on the superficiality with which we deal with cultural and material problems. I have not the slightest doubt that our world is changing much more quickly than we are capable of imagining.

Fidel Castro Ruz

March 29, 2012

REFLEXIONES DEL FIDEL CASTRO



Las escenas fílmicas de la matanza en Libia, que comienzan a conocerse, indignan por la ausencia total de humanismo y las groseras mentiras que sirvieron de pretexto para invadir y apoderarse de los recursos naturales de aquel país.

Con más de 25 mil misiones de combate la aviación militar de la OTAN apoyó el monstruoso crimen.

Afirmaron que el Gobierno de Libia poseía fondos en el exterior que superaban los 200 mil millones de dólares. Nadie sabe en este instante dónde está y qué se ha hecho con ese dinero.

Un proceso electoral fraudulento garantizó el despojo de la presidencia del país más poderoso a favor de George W. Bush, un alcohólico sin tratamiento médico ni los más elementales principios éticos, quien ordenó a los graduados de West Point estar listos para atacar sorpresivamente y sin previo aviso a 60 o más oscuros rincones del mundo.

Semejante enajenado, a través de una maletica, podía decidir el uso de miles de armas nucleares; con un porcentaje mínimo de las mismas podía poner fin a la vida humana en el planeta.

Es triste recordar que en el lado opuesto de la superpotencia yanqui, otro enajenado, con tres botellas de Vodka en el estómago, proclamó la desintegración de la URSS y el desmantelamiento de más de 400 emplazamientos nucleares a cuyo alcance estaban todas las bases militares que amenazaban a ese país.

Aquellos acontecimientos no constituyeron una sorpresa. A lo largo de muchos años de lucha, la experiencia adquirida, el contacto con los acontecimientos, las ideas y los procesos históricos no daban lugar a sorpresa alguna.

Hoy los dirigentes rusos tratan de reconstruir aquel poderoso Estado que tanto esfuerzo y sacrificio costó crear.

Cuando el Papa Juan Pablo II visitó

nuestro país en 1998, más de una vez antes de su llegada conversé sobre variados temas con algún enviado suyo. Recuerdo particularmente la ocasión en que nos sentamos a cenar en una pequeña sala del Palacio de la Revolución con Joaquín Navarro Valls, Vocero del Papa, sentado frente a mí. A la derecha estaba un sacerdote amable e inteligente que venía con el Vocero y acompañaba a Juan Pablo II en las misas.

Curioso por los detalles, le pregunto a Navarro Valls ¿Usted cree que el inmenso cielo con millones de estrellas se hizo para placer de los habitantes de la tierra cuando nos dignamos a mirar hacia arriba alguna noche? “Absolutamente” me respondió. “Es el único planeta habitado del Universo”.

Me dirijo entonces al sacerdote y le digo ¿Qué piensa usted de eso padre? Me responde: “A mi juicio hay un 99,9 por ciento

de las estrellas enanas rojas tienen una ‘super-Tierra’ orbitándola en su zona habitable, donde puede existir agua en estado líquido en la superficie del planeta”, dijo Xabier Bonfills, jefe del equipo del Observatorio de Ciencias del Universo de Grenoble, Francia.

“Debido a que las enanas rojas son tan comunes -hay como 160.000 millones de ellas en la Vía Láctea- esto nos lleva a los sorprendentes resultados de que hay decenas de millones de esos planetas solo en nuestra galaxia”.

“Sus estudios sugieren que hay ‘super-Tierras’ en zonas habitables en el 41% de los casos, con un rango del 28 al 95%.

“40% de las estrellas enanas rojas tienen una ‘super-Tierra’ orbitándola en su zona habitable, donde puede existir agua en estado líquido”.

LA NECESIDAD DE ENRIQUECER NUESTROS CONOCIMIENTOS

de posibilidades de que exista la vida inteligente en algún otro planeta”. La

respuesta no violaba ningún principio religioso. Mentalmente multipliqué no se sabe cuántas veces la cifra. Era el tipo de respuesta que yo consideraba correcta y seria.

Después aquel noble sacerdote fue siempre amistoso con nuestro país. Para compartir la amistad no hay que compartir las creencias.

Hoy jueves, como ocurre con frecuencia creciente, una entidad europea de conocida solvencia sobre el tema expresa textualmente:

“Podría haber miles de millones de planetas no mucho mas grandes que la Tierra orbitando débiles estrellas en nuestra galaxia, de acuerdo con un equipo internacional de astrónomos.

“Este número estimado de ‘super-Tierras’ -planetas con hasta diez veces la masa de la Tierra- se basa en detecciones ya realizadas y luego extrapoladas para incluir la población de las llamadas ‘estrellas enanas’ de la Vía Láctea.”

“Nuestras nuevas observaciones con Harps arrojan que alrededor del 40%



En pleno receso veraniego los cursos de verano de ciencia y técnica proponen a los jóvenes otra opción recreativa

“Eso lleva a la pregunta obvia, sobre si alguno de esos planetas no solamente es habitable sino que tiene vida.”

“Pero estas estrellas son dadas a las erupciones estelares, que pueden bañar a los planetas cercanos con rayos X o radiación ultravioleta, lo que puede hacer menos probable la existencia de vida.

“Tenemos idea de cómo encontrar rasgos de vida en esos planetas”, dijo el investigador del Observatorio de Génova, Stephane Udry.”

“Si podemos ver trazas de elementos relacionados con vida como oxígeno en esa luz, entonces podríamos obtener indicios sobre si hay vida en ese planeta”.

La simple lectura de estas noticias demuestran la posibilidad y la necesidad de enriquecer nuestros conocimientos, hoy fragmentados y dispersos.

Quizás nos lleve a posiciones más críticas acerca de la superficialidad con que abordamos problemas tanto culturales como materiales. A mí no me cabe la menor duda de que nuestro mundo cambia mucho más aceleradamente de lo que somos capaces de imaginar.

Fidel Castro Ruz
Marzo 29 de 2012

de Justicia y de profesionales afiliados a la Unión Nacional de Juristas de Cuba. Según ha dicho la Ministra de Justicia a la prensa nacional, su discusión en nuestro Parlamento está incluida en el plan legislativo de 2012. Confío en que la Conferencia del Partido ayude a definir explícitamente una política de no discriminación por orientación sexual e identidad de género y que, a su vez, ayude a desarticular los prejuicios que obstaculizan su aprobación. El propósito de estas propuestas responde a la necesidad de reconocer y proteger en derechos, cada vez más, a toda nuestra población.

En la conga contra la Homofobia, que se efectuó el 14 de mayo del 2011 En la conga contra la Homofobia, que se efectuó el 14 de mayo del 2011

Con relación a facilitar el cambio de identidad legal para las personas transexuales, sin necesidad de ser intervenidas quirúrgicamente (como ocurre actualmente), a través de la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas presentamos, en 2008, una propuesta de Decreto Ley de Identidad de Género al Presidente de la Comisión de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos de la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular. Aún no tenemos información sobre la evolución de esta iniciativa legislativa.

La propuesta tiene un carácter incluyente para todas las personas transexuales, identificadas por una Comisión especializada del Ministerio de Salud Pública, pues no todas pueden ser intervenidas quirúrgicamente ya sea a causa de su salud o de sus decisiones personales.

- A propósito de su visita a Holanda, usted escribió en su cuenta de twitter @CastroEspinM "en Cuba existe una política explícita de atención no solo a la prostitución sino también al sexo transaccional, que es invisibilizado". ¿Podría explicar?

Referente al tema de la prostitución, parto del convencimiento de que se debe respetar la autonomía sobre el cuerpo de

todas las personas, como un derecho. Sin embargo, el mercado sexual no ha desaparecido gracias al predominio de formas de organización social basadas en los sistemas de explotación patriarcal y clasista entre los seres humanos.

Algunas de sus expresiones resultan difíciles de visibilizar porque los esfuerzos de los gobiernos están centrados en las interpretaciones más tradicionales y explícitas, como la prostitución y la trata de personas. En estos casos se encuentran el sexo transaccional, que se refiere a mujeres y hombres que obtienen algún beneficio de la práctica del sexo, que no es necesariamente dinero. Siempre ha existido, pero sólo ahora se habla de este fenómeno y en América Latina está muy relacionado con el turismo sexual, que tiene una lógica propia.

En Cuba, desde 1959 la Federación



acción de Mujeres Cubanas (FMC) lideró la atención a los problemas que generaba la prostitución como forma de explotación, principalmente hacia las mujeres, que también eran desfavorecidas no sólo por su condición de género, sino también por razones de raza y clase social.

Se sabe que había más de 100 mil prostitutas en condiciones muy precarias y humillantes, que han expresado, en testimonios públicos, cómo la Revolución les cambió la vida, al beneficiarlas y facilitar su protagonismo dentro de un gran proceso liberador que contribuyó a dignificarlas.

El trabajo realizado por la Revolución para erradicar la prostitución es un tema de orgullo nacional. La crisis iniciada en 1990 propició su reaparición como problema social con nuevas características, especialmente vinculada al desarrollo del

turismo internacional y una consecuente presencia de clientes que pagan servicios sexuales y generan este mercado. Por eso, elogio la experiencia sueca de penalizar al cliente, que ha demostrado efectividad en la disminución de la explotación sexual.

- ¿Cuántas operaciones de cambio de sexo se han realizado en Cuba hasta el momento y atendiendo a qué requisitos se hace la selección?

Se han realizado 15 cirugías de reasignación sexual. La primera estuvo a cargo de especialistas cubanos en 1988. Pero no fue hasta 2007 que se retomó este procedimiento por el Ministerio de Salud Pública.

Existe una Comisión Nacional de Atención Integral a Personas Transexuales que ha recibido 175 solicitudes de la población trans desde 1979 y son atendidos según parámetros internacionalmente acordados. En la medida que divulguemos estos servicios en los medios de comunicación, llegarán más personas que viven el conflicto y no saben que pueden recibir ayuda.

Hasta el momento, las personas trans deben pasar por un período de seguimiento de dos años en el que reciben acompañamiento por especialistas, junto con un tratamiento hormonal personalizado, mientras dura la transición hacia el género con el cual se identifican. Al final de este proceso, la Comisión avala las personas que son elegibles y están aptas para la cirugía de reasignación sexual (conocida popularmente como "cambio de sexo") y para el cambio de identidad legal.

Esta cirugía no se trata de un capricho estético, sino de un procedimiento científicamente consensuado a nivel internacional, que demuestra un beneficio considerable para el bienestar de las personas transexuales. El procedimiento quirúrgico contribuye a aliviar la angustia permanente que han vivido estas personas desde su infancia temprana, como resultado de los prejuicios que conducen a la incompreensión y la discriminación.

- ¿Qué opinión le confiere la confirmación, hecha por Wikileaks, del financiamiento (\$ 300. 000) que el gobierno de EE.UU. ha destinado para la subversión

del proyecto LGBT en Cuba?

En primer lugar, esta reacción explícita del gobierno de los Estados Unidos demuestra que el trabajo que se realiza en Cuba por los derechos de las personas lesbianas, gays, bisexuales, transexuales e intersex (LGBTI) le preocupa y les ocupa, en tiempo y en recursos. ¿Por qué? Porque demuestra la voluntad política del gobierno cubano para enfrentar la homofobia y la transfobia como formas de discriminación, que no son coherentes con el proyecto emancipador que defiende la Revolución cubana.

Lo que estamos haciendo desarticula las manidas campañas mediáticas para desacreditar la espiritualidad del proyecto revolucionario y pone en evidencia los recursos del contribuyente norteamericano destinados a mentir, difamar, satanizar y colapsar esta experiencia transformadora y a sus líderes.

Se han dedicado a privilegiar escasas voces carentes de autenticidad, reproduciéndolas en medios de comunicación tradicionales, blogs y redes sociales, que cumplen un programa burdo de desinformación con un guión preestablecido.

Se han presentado evidencias muy claras de las órdenes que reciben estos mercenarios, de parte de la Oficina de Intereses de los Estados Unidos en La Habana. Algunas de estas evidencias fueron las publicadas por Wikileaks.

Muchas personas que han sido testigos de hechos concretos y después leen las noticias, que son ampliamente divulgadas, pueden apreciar la grosera manera de manipular a la opinión pública internacional en medios de prensa muy influyentes, como CNN en español, El País, Der Spiegel, Radio Nederland, entre otros.

- En Cuba se han dado pasos para promover el respeto a la libre y responsable orientación sexual e identidad de género, sin embargo, aún no son suficientes. En su opinión cuál es el camino a seguir para llegar a los corazones de todos los cubanos y desterrar, de una vez por todas, la homofobia en nuestro país.

Los primeros pasos fueron dados por la Federación de Mujeres Cubanas, con la

creación del Grupo Nacional de Trabajo de Educación Sexual en 1972, antecedente del CENESEX.

La FMC también se ocupó de propiciar un debate público sobre estos temas. Un momento de impacto fue la publicación del libro "El hombre y la mujer en la intimidad" (Sigfred Schnabel, 1979), en el que una voz científica argumentaba, por primera vez en Cuba, por qué la homosexualidad no es considerada una enfermedad.

Muchas personas homosexuales me han

sexu-
co -



En la Conga contra la Homofobia Mariela Castro y las redes sociales del CeneSEX exigieron a Obama la libertad de Los Cinco antiterroristas cubanos.

mentado el beneficio que significaron estos mensajes, frente a la carga estigmatizadora que la sociedad les impone.

Justamente después de valorar que las acciones que hemos realizado no son suficientes, en el año 2007 nos acogimos a la iniciativa del activista francés Georges Tin de celebrar el Día Internacional contra la Homofobia cada 17 de mayo, porque en esa fecha de 1990 la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) eliminó la homosexualidad de su manual de clasificación de enfermedades mentales.

A partir de esta experiencia, en 2008 comenzamos a trabajar con una estrategia educativa, con el apoyo de los medios de comunicación, por el respeto a la libre y responsable orientación sexual e identidad de género.

Estas actividades han sido apoyadas por

numerosas instituciones del Estado y organizaciones de la sociedad civil, con el respaldo del Departamento Ideológico del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba, y han contribuido a articular un movimiento LGBTIH, con la peculiaridad de incluir a personas heterosexuales que participamos activamente en esta causa.

En la Conga contra la Homofobia Mariela Castro y las redes sociales del CeneSEX exigieron a Obama la libertad de Los Cinco antiterroristas cubanos

¿Por qué elegimos una estrategia educativa y comunicacional? Porque se trata de un proceso de transformación cultural profundo, de aportar elementos de análisis para desarticular los prejuicios que se han establecido históricamente para dominar a las personas, sus sexualidades y sus cuerpos. El cambio de la conciencia social es muy complejo y lleva mucho tiempo, pero debe existir voluntad política para facilitar el cambio, de lo contrario estaríamos reproduciendo las formas de pensar de las sociedades explotadoras que nos precedieron.

- ¿Cuánto de Vilma hay en Mariela?

La oposición permanente a todas las expresiones de injusticia social. El compromiso con el proceso revolucionario que se ha generado desde las primeras reacciones

emancipadoras de nuestro pueblo, que se cristalizaron en las luchas por la independencia definitiva de la nación cubana. La sinceridad, la

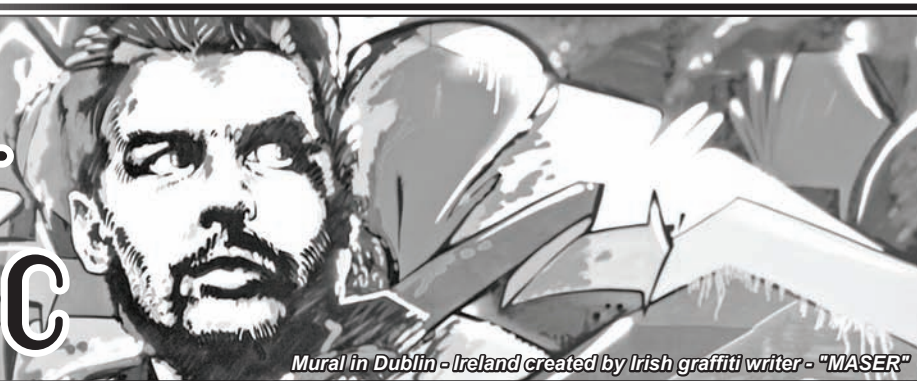
inconformidad, la humildad y la perseverancia.

http://www.cubasi.cu/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=3467:mariela-castro%E2%80%99Cal-gobierno-de-eeuu-le-preocupa-y-ocupa-el-movimiento-lgbt-de-cuba%E2%80%99D

Visite el blog de la autora: <http://latidosdecuba.blogspot.com>



CHÉ'S COMBAT IN GAELIC



Mural in Dublin - Ireland created by Irish graffiti writer - "MASER"

By Manuel E. Yepe*

A Cuba News translation. Edited by Walter Lippmann.

The publication by The New York Times on July 3rd of Maureen Dowd's article "Gaelic Guerilla" became evidence of the obsessive panic still generated by the image of Che Guevara and the deep hold his ideas maintain in peoples of the Third World and the rich countries in the periphery of the Empire.

The article talks about Bill Cameron, an enthusiastic Labour Party member of the Galway City Council, a town in the western area of the Republic of Ireland, who never thought he would be involved in an international conflict.

According to Bill Cameron, the story began in 1960 when Che made a brief stop in Ireland one night after his flight from Moscow to Cuba stopped for refueling at Shannon airport and then got stuck in fog.

It was then that Che visited a pub—a typical British bar—in the West Clare seaside town of Kilkee near the airport, where he was waited on by Jim FitzPatrick, a young bartender from Dublin, who served him an Irish whisky and held a dialogue that had great impact on the young man. The guerrilla leader told FitzPatrick that his ancestors were Lynches from Galway and that he admired the Irish revolutionaries who had helped Ireland "shake off the shackles of empire."

Cameron has been pushing the idea that "Dr. Che Guevara Lynch," as his Irish supporters dubbed him, counts as a "Galwegian" because he's descended from the Lynches and Blakes, two of the 14 original tribes of Galway, well-to-do merchant families who once ruled the city.

According to Cameron, Patrick Lynch emigrated to Argentina in the mid-1700s and

settled in Buenos Aires. "Che is part of the Irish diaspora," he proudly notes.

The NYT article states that Ernesto Che Guevara's grandmother Ana Isabel Lynch, and his father, Ernesto Guevara Lynch, told an interviewer in 1969: "The first thing to note is that in my son's veins flowed the blood of Irish rebels."

Cameron agrees: "I'm sure Che studied guerrilla tactics of the IRA., the same way the

art that would be "a total homage" to "man, image and ideal," according to McGuinness, featuring three glass panes in different colors of Che's iconic image.

When plans for the memorial were printed last winter in the newspaper, "all hell broke loose," Cameron recalls. In Washington, extreme right-wing Republican Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida, chairwoman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, was furious. She wrote to Prime Minister Enda Kenny, calling Che a "mass murderer and human rights abuser." The corporate press followed suit, condemning the "monstrous project" until the controversy caused the outgoing mayor of Galway and others to back away, claiming they didn't realize an actual monument was being planned, and the project was stopped.

Cameron protested arguing that "Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and her buddies down south, lunatic fringe Republicans with a Miami-Cuban agenda, should not be allowed to dictate what happens in Galway politics."

Cameron hopes the Galway city council will resume taking the memorial matter up soon. "The ultimate fruit of all this is that Che will be known as having the Irish blood and the Galway connection," he says. "And that is an achievement in itself."

July 2012

**Manuel E. Yepe, is a lawyer, economist and journalist. He is a professor at the Higher Institute of International Relations in Havana. He was Cuba's ambassador to Romania, general director of the Prensa Latina agency; vice president of the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television; founder and national director of the Technological Information System (TIPS) of the United Nations Program for Development in Cuba, and secretary of the Cuban Movement for the Peace and Sovereignty of the Peoples.*



Che Guevara tribute mural - Bogsides Co. Derry - Ireland

Mau Mau in Kenya did."

However, things got complicated after Cameron proposed putting up a memorial to honor, Che Guevara, or "our Che," as Cameron fondly called him, while referring to him in his proposal as a famous son of Hibernia (Ireland for the Romans).

The council voted last year to build the monument to honor Che. Cameron says he got pledges of funding from the Cuban and Argentine embassies in Dublin. "I'm sure the monument will attract visitors from Latin America," Cameron forecasted.

The architect Simon McGuinness and the Dublin artist Jim FitzPatrick—none other than the young bartender who served Che at the West Clare pub in 1960—designed a plan for a three-dimensional, interactive work of

EL CHÉ COMBATE EN GAELES

Por Manuel E. Yepe*

El New York Times publicó el 3 de julio un artículo con la firma de Maureen Dowd titulado “Guerrilla Gaélica” que demuestra por sí solo el grado de obsesión y pánico que aún provocan en la reacción la imagen, las ideas y la profundidad con que se inserta el ideario del Che Guevara en los pueblos, no solo del Tercer Mundo sino también de los países ricos de la periferia imperial.

En el artículo se habla de Bill Cameron, un entusiasta político local del Partido Laborista, miembro del Concejo de Galway City, población del oeste de la República de Irlanda, quien nunca imaginó verse involucrado en un conflicto internacional.

La historia, según la cuenta Bill Cameron, comenzó en 1960 cuando el avión en que viajaba Che Guevara de Moscú hacia Cuba hizo una escala técnica en el aeropuerto irlandés de Shannon, para reabastecerse de combustible y la estancia se prolongó algunas horas a causa de una intensa niebla.

Fue en tal circunstancia que el Che visitó brevemente un pub, característico bar británico, en la población costera de West Clare, cerca del aeropuerto.

Allí, Che fue atendido por un joven cantinero dublinés de nombre Jim FitzPatrick, quien dice haberle servido al Che aquella noche una copa de whiskey irlandés y haber sostenido con él un diálogo que lo impactó vivamente. El líder guerrillero le dijo que era descendiente de irlandeses y le comentó que sus ascendientes eran Lynches de Galway y que admiraba a los revolucionarios irlandeses que ayudaron a Irlanda a “sacudirse las cadenas del imperio”.

Cameron ha estado divulgando y promoviendo la idea de que “el doctor Che Guevara Lynch” -como le llaman sus seguidores en Irlanda- es “galwegiano”, descendiente de los Lynches y los Blakes, dos de las 14 tribus originarias de Galway, importantes familias de comerciantes que en el pasado rigieron la ciudad.

Según Cameron, Patrick Lynch emigró

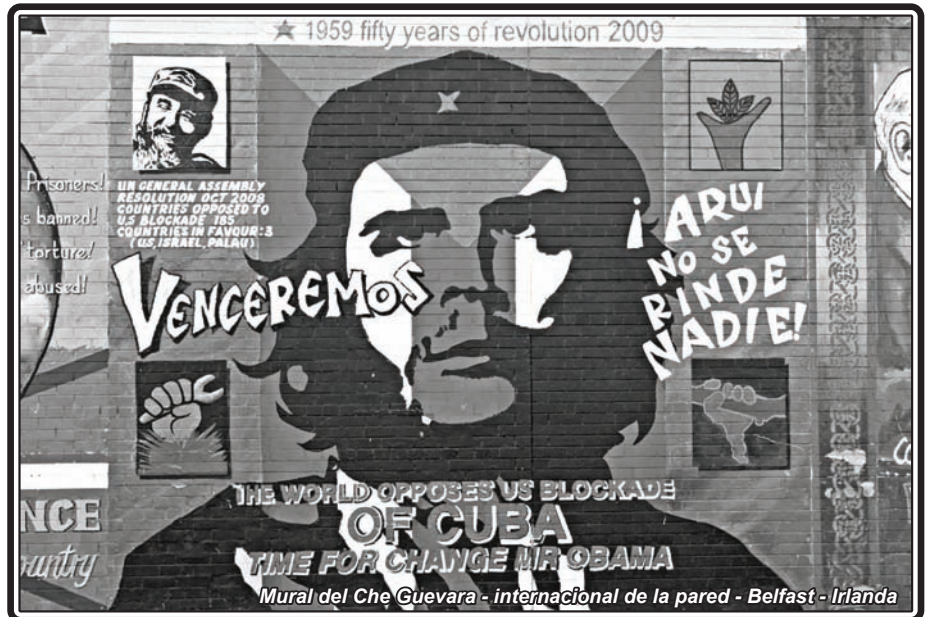
a Argentina a mediados de los años 1700 y se estableció en Buenos Aires. “Che es parte de la diáspora irlandesa”, asegura con orgullo.

El artículo del NYT hace notar que la abuela de Che Guevara, Ana Isabel Lynch, y su padre, Ernesto Guevara Lynch, dijeron en una entrevista en 1969 que “lo primero que se nota en las venas de mi hijo es que

planos en cristal de diferentes colores con la icónica imagen del Che, según McGuinness.

Cuando la prensa hizo públicos los planes acerca de la construcción del monumento, “se soltó el infierno”, dice Cameron.

En Washington, la ultrareaccionaria representante republicana por la Florida y presidenta del Comité de Relaciones Exteriores de la Cámara, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, enfu-



fluye sangre de rebeldes irlandeses”.

Cameron concuerda: Estoy seguro que el Che estudió las tácticas guerrilleras del I.R.A., de la misma manera que lo hicieron los rebeldes Mau Mau de Kenia.

Sin embargo, todo empezó a complicarse para Cameron a partir de que propuso la construcción del monumento en honor de Che Guevara o “nuestro Che”, como lo llama Cameron, quien, al fundamentar la propuesta, lo calificó de famoso hijo de Hibernia (Irlanda, para los antiguos romanos).

El pasado año, el Concejo aprobó con su voto la construcción del monumento en honor del Che y Cameron afirma haber recibido promesas de aportes para su ejecución de las embajadas de Argentina y Cuba en Dublín. “Estoy seguro que el monumento atraerá a visitantes de Latinoamérica”, auguró Cameron.

El arquitecto Simon McGuinness y el artista dublinés Jim FitzPatrick -que no es otro que aquel joven cantinero que en 1960 conversó con el Che en el pub de West Clare- realizaron un proyecto artístico tridimensional interactivo del monumento, llamado a constituir un “homenaje total al hombre, la imagen y el ideal, forjando tres

reció. Le envió un hosco mensaje al Primer Ministro de Irlanda, Enda Kenny, llamando al Che “asesino masivo y violador de los derechos humanos”. Se sumó la prensa corporativa a la ofensiva condenando el “monstruoso proyecto” hasta provocar que el Alcalde saliente de Galway, y varios más en el Concejo, se retractaran alegando desconocimiento de las particularidades del proyecto, lo que determinó su paralización.

Cameron protestó, argumentando que no se debe permitir que Ileana Ros-Lehtinen y sus locos compinches sureños republicanos vengan, con su agenda miamense-cubana, a dictarnos como deben ser las cosas en la política de Galway.

Cameron ahora espera que el Concejo de Galway reasumirá prontamente el proyecto del memorial al Che. “Lo esencial es que se conozca que el Che llevaba sangre irlandesa en sus venas y acerca de su conexión con Galway”, concluye.

Julio de 2012.

*Manuel E. Yepe Menendez es periodista y se desempeña como Profesor adjunto en el Instituto Superior de las Relaciones Internacionales de La Habana.

By Janine Solanki

“Educate! Organize! Mobilize!” Throughout the decades, these three words have outlined the tasks of social movements the world over. In Vancouver’s antiwar coalition, Mobilization Against War & Occupation (MAWO)

these are three words that can be



seen in action throughout MAWO’s ongoing work to oppose this new era of war and occupation that we are living in. Right now the center of this war drive is the Middle East, where the U.S. is using their military might to try to gain complete hegemony over the region. Two countries, Iran and Syria, stand in the way of complete U.S. domination, as countries with independent governments that do not follow the dictates of the U.S. government. Iran and Syria are heavily targeted by imperialist forces right now – and therefore two countries which the antiwar movement must defend from sanctions, covert operations, and military intervention.

Educate!

The actions of the U.S., Canada and other imperialist countries are criminal, unjust and inhuman – the sanctions that cripple economies and effect peoples’ ability to access food, medicines and other essentials; the directing, funding and supplying of weapons to forces inside other countries in efforts to overthrow a sovereign government; and finally the direct military intervention that kills indiscriminately with missiles and bombs. However how this is portrayed in the all pervasive mainstream media is that this is all against a evil dictator

EDUCATE! ORGANIZE! MOBILIZE!

MAWO Activists Discuss & Organize Against Imperialist Intervention in the Middle East

and to protect the human rights of people that U.S. politicians claim to care so much about.

Antiwar events that aim to educate with not only information but by opening the floor to discussion, and yes, debate, are essential. How can an antiwar organization have

any demands, without informed activists that are put to the test of debate? MAWO organizes bi-monthly free public forums for this aim, the most recent titled “State of War in Syria! U.S., E.U, NATO Hands Off Syria!” At this forum on Tuesday July 10th, MAWO co-chair and forum MC Alison Bodine started the forum with a section of news clips that showed alternative media’s coverage of events in Syria. This exposed the blatant lies and manipulation being touted in the mainstream news, and the heavy hand that the U.S. and their allies play in the rebel actions in Syria. The video clips

were followed by speakers Janine Solanki, MAWO co-chair, and Ali Yerevani, political editor of the Fire This Time newspaper and participant in the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The speakers provided more analysis and

history to the current targeting of Syria, as well as a overview of the world situation that this imperialist offensive is taking place in. After the speakers the floor was opened to discussion, which centered not only on the facts of what is happening in Syria, but also what we as antiwar activists can do to oppose the war drive against Syria.

Organize – then Mobilize!

The forum finished with participants being invited to join MAWO’s next event – the monthly antiwar rally and petition campaign – to take the

information and arguments that had just been discussed to the streets. Every month MAWO holds

rally and petition campaigns in downtown Vancouver in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery, and on Saturday July 21st the demands focused on “Hands Off Iran and Syria!” and “Free Bradley Manning Now!” (to learn more about MAWO’s Free Bradley Manning Campaign, see

page 30). Teams of

petitioners hit the streets and

interrupted the flow of a busy downtown Saturday afternoon to ask passer-by’s “would you like to sign a petition against sanctions and war on Syria?” “sign your name to demand no sanctions on Iran!” and “sign the petition – free Bradley Manning!” which resulted in petition signatures but also good discussions and hundreds of leaflets, newsletters and brochures distributed. An informational table was set up with banners reflecting the demands of the petition campaign, and was the source of much attraction as people stopped to get more information, sign petitions, and to discuss and debate with MAWO organizers. These MAWO rally and petition drives serve to mobilize on the streets against war and occupation, but also to educate on a broader scale as activists reach out to the public and engage new people in the struggle against war and occupation.

While forums and rally and petition campaigns are part of MAWO’s consistent monthly antiwar events, MAWO also holds organizational meetings, conferences, pickets, the annual MAWO Hip Hop Festival for Peace and Film Festival for Peace. To find out about MAWO’s next event or get more information, visit www.mawovancouver.org



FREE BRADLEY MANNING!



While the Legal Battle Continues, Activists Campaign to Free Bradley Manning!

By Janine Solanki

From July 16 – 19 Bradley Manning underwent yet another pre-trial hearing, where this time the outcome was a ruling by military judge Denise Lind set to block Bradley Manning's defense against his charge of "aiding the enemy by indirect means," the charge that could put him in prison for life or even bring on the death penalty. The ruling asserts that evidence showing that Bradley Manning's Wikileaks releases brought little or no harm to national security, and therefore did not "aid the enemy by indirect means," will not be allowed in court.

These pre-trial hearings determine what will or won't be allowed in the court when Bradley Manning's case is finally put to trial in a court martial in September 2012. This latest ruling comes after over two years of imprisonment and torture that this 24 year old U.S. soldier has faced. His crime? Bradley Manning is accused of leaking over 260,000 classified United States diplomatic cables, as well as videos and documents which have become known as the Afghan War Diary and the Iraq War Logs. Published on the whistleblower site Wikileaks, they further exposed U.S. war crimes around the world including mass killings, torture, corruption, and the government's web of lies and attempted cover-up of United States atrocities. Bradley Manning made a courageous decision to expose all of these documents and let the world know the truth behind the atrocities being hidden by the United States government.

The ability to argue the charge of "aiding the enemy through indirect means" in court is a key point in Bradley Manning's defense, and the latest ruling presents a hurdle to Bradley's defense, and makes the world-wide campaign to free Bradley Manning even more important. Recent evidence from dozens of government reports showed the leaks caused little "actual harm" to national security, yet this evidence will

not be allowed in court. "Two years after the alleged leaks, the conclusion is still merely that the information 'could' cause damage - not that it 'did' cause damage," the defense wrote in a filing to the court, calling the speculation of possible damage without proof "far-fetched and fanciful." In his filing to the court, Bradley Manning's lawyer David Coombs wrote that prosecutors wanted to hide "America's worst-kept secret -- that the alleged leaks did little to no harm to national security." The harm that is done it that of exposing to the public the atrocities committed by the U.S. in Iraq and Afghanistan, a crime of telling the truth and blowing the whistle on war crimes.

Over the past two years of imprisonment, the U.S. military "justice" system has used torture and unjust, criminal treatment to punish Bradley Manning and to say to other soldiers "if you speak out, this will happen to you." But this has only made the call for justice and the demand for civil and human rights stronger and louder by Bradley Manning's supporters around the world. Bradley was held in solitary confinement for the first 10 months of his incarceration. During this time he was denied meaningful exercise, social interaction, sunlight, and has occasionally been kept completely naked. These conditions were unique to Bradley and are illegal even under U.S. military law as they amount to extreme pre-trial punishment. In the upcoming August 27 – 31 pre-trial hearings, the conditions that Bradley has faced in his two years of detention will be taken into account. However in the recent hearings, Judge Lind said that U.N. chief torture investigator Juan Mendez won't be allowed to testify in these coming hearings. Mendez's 14-month investigation concluded that Manning was subjected to "cruel, inhuman, and degrading" treatment. The reason he won't be allowed to testify? Because Mendez didn't visit with Bradley Manning personally – however this was because the military refused to allow him

an unmonitored visit with Bradley.

While the legal proceedings take place, the strongest defense for Bradley Manning is that of the people all around the world taking to the streets with their picket signs, banners and voices demanding "Free Bradley Manning!" Here in Vancouver, Canada, the Free Bradley Manning Campaign is working in coordination with international efforts and organizes petition drives, forums and pickets at the U.S. Consulate to demand freedom for Bradley Manning. With a strong and consistent international campaign, we can keep Bradley Manning's case in the public eye and under public pressure, and see this soldier for humanity free!

To learn more about Bradley Manning's case visit www.bradleymanning.org

To get involved in the Free Bradley Manning Campaign in Vancouver, Canada visit www.mawovancouver.org



80th MONTHLY PICKET ACTION TO FREE THE CUBAN 5 HEROES HELD IN VANCOUVER

For 80 Months We Picketed and Shouted at the Door of US Consulate in Vancouver "Free Our 5 Cuban Heroes!" And if We Have to We Will Do it Every Month Until They Are Completely Free!

By Alison Bodine

On one afternoon every month, for the last 80 months, the sidewalk in front of the U.S. Consulate in downtown Vancouver has been filled with more than the usual hustle of people going and coming from work. It is here that peace-loving people in Vancouver gather to demand freedom for the Cuban 5, political prisoners held in the U.S. since their arrest in 1998, bringing with them picket signs, banners, and strong voices.

Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González, are being held in the U.S. after being convicted in a Miami courtroom on trumped-up charges of "conspiracy to commit espionage" and "conspiracy to commit murder" in 2001. Known as the Cuban 5, these 5 courageous men were in the United States investigating the anti-Cuban terrorist organizations that operate freely in the U.S. These groups, and the U.S.'s covert war against Cuba, have been responsible for the deaths of almost 3,500 people, and wounded over 2,000; using biological weaponry, live-stock poisoning and bombings to try destabilize Cuba and overthrow the Cuban government. The work of these 5 anti-terrorist fighters stopped these attacks, and saved the lives of people in Cuba and the U.S., but when they turned over information that they had collected to the U.S. government, the Cuban 5, not the terrorists, were arrested.

It is in the face of this gross injustice that the Free the Cuban 5 Committee – Vancouver organized the first picket in front of the U.S. Consulate on Dec. 12, 2005 and with this same determination came to return for the 80th picket on July 5th, 2012. Energetic chanting of "Free the Cuban Five Now!" and "The 5 Are Heroes, You Will See – Hey Obama Let Them Free!" filled the air around the Consulate. Rounds of picketing were joined by speeches of solidarity and protest from social justice activists in Vancouver. There was also special greeting from Alicia Jrapko, Coordinator of the International Committee to Free the Cuban 5, who joined the picket over the telephone from Oakland, California.

The 80th monthly picket action marked

solidarity with the Cuban 5 becomes clearer as the injustices against the 5 continue to pile up. As an example, on July 7th, Gerardo Hernández, who is serving 2 life-sentences plus 15 years in a prison in California, was recently denied a Consular-visit with Cuban officials, and has faced tremendous difficulty in being able to meet with his lawyer to discuss important legal proceedings. Furthermore, Rene Gonzalez, who was released from prison after completing his full sentence last year, is being forced to serve out a 3-year parole in Florida, where his life is in under constant threat.

The late Leonard Weinglass, a famous social justice lawyer in the U.S. who worked on the case of the Cuban 5, once explained "Solidarity is a necessity, not to intimidate the court, but to indicate that the world is watching and the law should be followed." 80 picket actions in front of the U.S. Consulate in Vancouver have shown that the world is watching.

The Free the Cuban 5 Committee – Vancouver will continue to return to the sidewalk in front of the U.S. consulate every month until the Cuban 5 are free. The nearly 14 year imprisonment of our 5 heroes has given us all an example of humanity, dignity and strength, and together we know that we will win!

To get involved in the Free the Cuban 5 Committee – Vancouver:
www.freethethe5vancouver.ca

For more information about the Cuban 5:
www.antiterroristas.cu
www.thecuban5.org
www.freethethefive.org



an important milestone in the campaign to free the Cuban 5 in Vancouver, and one of renewed commitment to the struggle to win their freedom. With each passing month the necessity of international

**Who is
VCSC ?**
VANCOUVER COMMUNITIES
IN SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA

**For more information
contact:**

vancubasolidarity@gmail.com

778-882-5223

www.vancubasolidarity.com



Viene de la página 12

los IFCO / el equipo legal de Pastores por la Paz con la ayuda y el consejo de Linda Backiel, abogada de Pastores por la Paz, y por supuesto la coordinación, la intervención directa, y el liderazgo de Gail Walker, co-directora de IFCO / Pastores por la Paz.

El efectivo trabajo del equipo jurídico, junto con dos de nuestros organizadores en el interior del edificio de Aduanas de EE.UU., así como la continua protesta a ambos lados del cruce de la frontera y por supuesto una presencia muy fuerte de los medios de comunicación, obligaron a las autoridades fronterizas a revertir su decisión anterior. A eso de las 14:00, después de 24 horas de una batalla de ideas, una batalla por la humanidad, el camión lleno de ayuda humanitaria

para Cuba pasó la frontera. Saludos de la victoria llenaron el aire de todas las localidades fronterizas de los EE.UU. Y Canadá. Alentando a la victoria y coreando "EE. UU. Manos Fuera de Cuba!" Con banderas cubanas y muchos carteles de los Cinco Héroes cubanos, todos en la misma línea de la frontera para que los vieron los automóviles y camiones, crearon un espacio lleno de la esencia de la justicia y la esperanza. Justicia para el pueblo cubano y la esperanza para la liberación de nuestros 5 Héroes cubanos de las cárceles de Estados Unidos y de la libertad supervisada.

**¡Es sólo con resistencia que vamos a vencer!
¡Manos Fuera de Cuba!
¡Venceremos!**

Subscribe to Fire This Time!

NAME

ADDRESS

EMAIL

PHONE

For a one year subscription, make cheques payable to "Nita Palmer"

Send along with form to:

PO Box 21607

Vancouver BC

V5L 5G3

Canada \$15

USA \$20

International \$30

Cuba / Venezuela FREE!

Distribute Revolutionary Change in Your Area!

For distribution of Fire This Time in your area, across BC, and internationally, please contact:

Nita Palmer

Publicity and Distribution

Coordinator

Phone: (604) 780-7604

Email: distro@firethistime.net



Contra el Terrorismo Mediático
Against Terrorism in the Media

<http://en.cubadebate.cu>

<http://www.cubadebate.cu>

JUVENTUD
rebelde

<http://www.juventudrebelde.cu>

<http://www.juventudrebelde.co.cu>

SUBSCRIBE!

DIARIO
Granma

NEWSPAPER

<http://www.granma.cu/ingles/>

VANCOUVER COMMUNITIES IN SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA
WWW.VANCUBASOLIDARITY.COM

**Celebrate
the July 26th Movement
& the Gains of the Cuban Revolution!**

Film. Live Music. Speakers
THURSDAY, JULY 26
7pm Joe's Cafe
1150 Commercial Dr. @ William St.

5th ANNUAL VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL
**CHE GUEVARA
CONFERENCE**

**CUBA'S
REFORM
CAPITALISM OR SOCIALISM**

VANCOUVER COMMUNITIES IN SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA - VCSC
WWW.VANCUBASOLIDARITY.COM

NOVEMBER 3 & 4 - 2012
RUSSIAN HALL VANCOUVER, CANADA

**NOVEMBER 2 - SPECIAL EVENT:
IN HONOR OF THE FIVE CUBAN HEROES
HELD IN U.S. JAILS!**

FREE EVENT

VCSC